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The Splendid Adventure

THE SPLENDID ADVENTURE

A REVIEW OF EMPIRE RELATIONS

WITHIN AND WITHOUT

THE

COMMONWEALTH OF BRITANNIC NATIONS

by

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formerly

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THE BRITISH EMPIRE

THE British Empire is the great outstanding feature of the world to-day. All eyes are turned towards it ; it stands like some mountain-peak—its base in the swirling stream of world-events, its summit catching the beams of the rising sun—a beacon of promise, an assurance of safety not only to the five hundred millions of people who are gathered around its banners, but to civilised man in every country in the world. It is a world-empire ; its flag floats proudly in every quarter of the globe ; its ships sail every sea ; it is great, rich, and powerful, and daily the number of its people increases ; it has a history that stretches back through the ages—yet in its present form it is a thing which yesterday was not. It is called an Empire, but it is different from any empire which has ever existed.

It is unique. Along the road of Humanity's march it bursts out suddenly as an entirely new conception in man's endeavour to order his ways upon earth with dignity, peace, and usefulness. The Imperialism we are trying to shape in our idea of a Commonwealth of free and equal nations is a daring experiment. The world, realising what a precious inspiration we have grappled, looks on astounded and a little envious. The wreckage of Constitutions which have broken under the incalculable, capricious spirit of Man litters the history of a bewildered Europe. Time after time these rigid, ingeniously devised instruments have given way before the batterings of those human weaknesses and strengths which they were designed to control. Despotisms, benevolent and otherwise, republics and commonwealths, have crumbled to the despair of the wise men who planned them.

The Constitutions of Europe did not preserve order or unity within the confines of the countries for which they were designed. With what astonishment therefore must these nations look to-day upon this paradox of Imperial government which holds lightly but indissolubly a group of free nations, speaking each of them in the councils of the world, and bound, not as subjects and ruled, but as mutually affectionate partners. And when they perceive that these partners are chained together by no real Constitution but with the fragile cords of understanding, their wonder grows, for they cannot understand how this thing can be.

But one fact stands solidly before them—the Empire is great, powerful, rich, vital, united. They have seen, with considerable gratitude some of them, how it is capable of titanic, crushing effort. The war showed them too that, emerging from the ordeal of battle scarred, its resources drained, its shoulders breaking under burdens of debt and death, it could still draw from its apparently inexhaustible heart vitality enough to rise stronger and greater than before. And even as they admire they know that its works are built upon a plan that by every rule and theory ought to collapse. They see, they applaud, but they do not understand.

The British Empire is not fashioned to a plan. Nobody foresaw it, designed it, or deliberately built it up like a symphony upon the theme of enlightened democracy with which it dominates the ears of the nations to-day. It is not the dream of a conqueror, translated patiently, expensively, into possessions, dependencies. Neither is it an accident—something which just happened. It is an organic growth moulded by time and circumstance. When the bud formed, no one realised what the flower would be. The flower passed into fruit. The seeds strike into the earth. What new wonder they will bring forth we do not know. And that is for us, of all its phases, the most fascinating, for in every moment this amazing institution flings some new surprise upon the world.

Its extent, its rapid development from a second-rate island kingdom torn by internecine strife to a mighty world-power riveted under the hammers of war and peace, have created in some minds the illusion that it is an affair of chance, a monstrous phenomenon, a fortuitous and ephemeral combination destined to pass as quickly and amazingly as it came. Others ascribe the Empire to conquest, and affect to see in it a menace to the peace of the world. But although, as in the making of all States, conquest and chance contributed much, they in themselves do not sufficiently explain the Empire's most striking features—its steady and continuous development, its adaptability to rapidly changing environment, and, above all, its unity and freedom. Conquest and adventure may suffice to gain, as they gained for Rome and Spain, but they will not sustain and develop an Empire—an Empire scattered over the whole world, embracing widely different spheres, enormously varying problems, a thousand and one diverging desires and aspirations; an Empire which gives to each part the freedom of complete self-government and inspires each part to unite for mutual protection and common interest as closely as the States of Germany after the war of 1870. No, the freedom which each enjoys and the unity which has made possible that freedom and guaranteed it do not go with a scheme of conquest; and the Empire's vivid kaleidoscopic pattern of varying national, political, and social characteristics and its common reaction to external stimuli are not petals of the blooms that wither along the straggling stalk of chance.

To Alexander, to Cæsar, to Napoleon, such a basis for an Empire as that upon which the British Commonwealth rests to-day would have seemed like a crazy-built structure of a madman's dream. Sieyès and the Academicians of all the ages would have condemned it with pitying, contemptuous scorn. Yet the miracle is that it works—not indeed with the precision of a machine, for it is an evolution, the story of which is incomplete. The unpitying fingers of time are even now moulding it to

the new shape that it will bear to-morrow, and no one can do more than guess what that shape will be.

But time and blind circumstance generated in its womb act through the agency of men. The Empire of to-morrow is in the hands of its people to make or to mar. It is great. It is strong. But it is mortal. It can endure the blows of fearful conflict long sustained. Against frontal attacks it is almost impregnable. But it has its Achilles heel. It is with the hope of helping my fellow-citizens throughout the Empire to a more profound appreciation of its greatness and its influence upon civilisation, and to more clearly understand the sources of its strength and the principles by which we must be guided if these are to be preserved, that I venture to present this review of Empire Relations and Empire Developments from the angle of one of the Dominions.

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

AN UNSPECTACULAR REVOLUTION

THE last three centuries have given Britain an amazing history. No one could read it without emotion, following the nation through periods of unutterable storm and stress, where another breath of adversity, another burden, another mistake, might have ended for ever its splendid adventure. It survived, it recovered, it grew; and to-day stands, scarred with the wounds of desperate but honourable conflict, potentially stronger than ever before. One might well imagine that prudence and foresight had always inspired the men who guided the Empire so magnificently to the days of its vast dominion. But we who pause to look over our shoulders at the clamorous panoply of British history, at the soldiers, the adventurers, the statesmen, the place-seekers, the blunderers, the traitors, who in turn have sought to mould it, are constrained to marvel at the manner in which events have shaped themselves, or have been shaped—for there is something that suggests a guiding hand—in the consummation of this great purpose. For while victories have saved Britain from disaster, the foundations of her greatness are rooted in defeat. Despots have paved the way to freedom; fools, weaklings, and profligates have unwittingly led her through darkness and danger into sunlight and triumph. It might indeed almost be said that the British people have won their place in the world despite the efforts of their rulers to force them into obscurity. And it is a fact that when the right action was so simple and obvious, they made blunders which brought the nation to the

verge of annihilation. Carelessness, incapacity, pig-headedness, complacency, a dozen times almost forced the British into the ruck of third-class nations. Yet, despite all these mistakes, despite the fantastic blunders and neglects of the Stuarts and stiff-mouthed George III, we have to-day an Empire which crystallises before the wondering eyes of the nations ideals of freedom and resilient power they dare only academically to consider.

How, then, since we seem to have had so little control of its development, are we to explain its present greatness? Has Chance dropped this amazing heritage upon us? Or do we owe it to the hands of a beneficent Providence who has directed the fortunes of our race, shaping it for a destiny waiting in the future? The real secret of the Empire is probably to be found in the fact that, however incompetent British rulers have often managed to be, they have shared with their people two qualities which serve as sword and buckler against misfortune and enemies—the capacity to adapt themselves to quickly and vastly changing circumstances, and, perhaps more precious still, the gift to profit by experience. These two rare possessions have been the sap of life in the growing organism. For the Empire did not spring from a pleasant soil, flattered and soothed by indulgent seasons. It has had to smash its way up through granite and fight for life with cataclysms and fire.

Men would have said in the seventeenth century that it was too late to start building a great Empire. A Napoleon with a huge army, driven by an indomitable determination, might hack a way to Imperial power, but it would be a power as unstable as the mercenary armies on which it would largely depend. The task of building on the foundations of trade and colonisation an Empire that would girdle the world might reasonably have seemed to dreamers, if among the splendored Elizabethan adventurers there were any dreamers, a vision born out, far, far out, of due time. For the process that was to culminate three centuries later at Versailles had even then begun; the boundaries of national domains were becom-

ing less plastic, more definite; the nations were already growing shells like molluscs and withdrawing inside their possessions and themselves. One of the most remarkable things about the Empire is just that it has been forged from metal that was already growing cold and hard, that it was expanding when the nations had begun to proclaim and guard jealously the spheres of their influence and power. The Empires of Rome and Greece and Carthage sprang up in a day when boundaries, nationalities, were comparatively fluid.

And the British accomplished this incredible work, first, because they were able to adapt themselves to the infinitely varying circumstances of the modern world. Bursting open the earth of empty continents, among surroundings so different from placid England as to seem to belong to another planet; or ruling hundreds of millions of Asiatics in a climate that burned the strength out of them and withered away their blood with fevers and exhaustion; or living side by side with men and women whose habits and ideas made them almost a different species—always, wherever they were, the British colonists have endeavoured, unconsciously if you like, but successfully, to adjust themselves to environment. Other nations, lacking this capacity, have sought, and still seek, when they encounter strange conditions, to adjust not themselves but their circumstances. And, of course, they have failed.

II

As I have remarked, statesmen and Crown have at various times done their best by ignorance and folly to baffle what some insist to be our benevolent Providence, and others, more prosaically, our capacity for clinging on, learning from blunders, and by titanic effort forcing ourselves to bear the heat of the sun, the stench of the marsh, the strangeness of the people, until they sink into the unconsciousness of habit and become accustomed things. The British Commonwealth of Nations is Britain's second Empire. The first crumbled under

the blundering hands of George III and his Ministers. So strong is the faculty for self-criticism in the British that we make the effort to tax the American Colonies assume the proportions of a grave moral wrong. It was, in fact, nothing of the kind; it was merely a foolish policy. Yet if this was the classic example of British leaders' short-sightedness, it offers also a convincing demonstration of that other gift of the British people—their ability to profit by their own mistakes. Britain hastened to turn several leaves, and in the years which followed, her other Colonies attained a gradually developing independence and importance. But the vision of a Commonwealth of Nations did not quicken the pulse of the statesmen who for nearly a hundred years after the War of Independence controlled the affairs of the Empire. They did not strive consciously for a great end or guess that at a turn of the road there would burst upon the astounded eyes of the nation the fair city towards which their patient work, their triumphs, even their mistakes, had gradually directed their steps.

People have often remarked that the Empire has not been made: it has grown. This is the best, but still an imperfect, expression of the thread which runs, like the motif of a symphony, through all the changing scenes of our history. The Empire is an organism, not a fabrication. To-day it does not remotely resemble the form in which it was contained a century ago. At every critical stage of its evolution the old order has melted into the new. This has frequently allowed strange anomalies to survive for a time; the garments of childhood have clung, often a little absurdly, about the developing body; but the growth has been so steady and natural that the Dominions passed from military outposts to colonies, from colonies to nations, without demanding any major operations. No dramatic stroke removed the chains of bondage, and even now their independence rests on no charter of right, and still less upon any rigid machinery. Here is the reason why the plan of Imperial Federation was so uncompromisingly rejected by the self-governing British

peoples. It is alien to the very spirit of their institutions, incompatible with every tradition of their growth.

To men who approach the study of the Empire without a perception of that vital principle its story must seem an unanswerable riddle. One might relate all the great events in England since Alfred's cakes and still leave the story only half told. Triumphs and disasters, wars and treaties, executions and restorations, Kings and Parliaments, Trafalgar and Waterloo—these are only fragments of a mosaic which, before one can appreciate it, must be completed and seen in true perspective. It is not in the events that we must search for the true significance of the Empire's history. Under those events runs a current of slow growth, which led Britain on from adjustment to adjustment until she found herself contemplating the institutions that make her now the leader of civilisation.

There was, for example, the slow whittling away of the king's powers. The events which achieved this are spectacular but insignificant beside the fact, hidden from everyone at the moment and for long afterwards, that each abdication of the Crown's old rights built another stone into the edifice of our unique democracy. The Crown fought hard for its prerogatives. The belief that they ruled by Divine Right went with great pain. Civil war and revolution were necessary to destroy it. The struggle was long and bitter, but in the end the people prevailed. The people determined upon two achievements: they would have a king, and they would have a king after their own hearts. They succeeded. They succeeded better than they could realise. The monarchy of Britain is so attuned to the circumstances of the British democracy that, of all political institutions, it may be regarded in this age as the most stable. And the reason is plain. Not only is it completely harmonious with its environment, but it performs necessary functions efficiently and, what is very important, performs them in a way the people desire. And it does some things which could not be done by other agencies.

We are vividly impressed by this natural, I almost said inevitable, growth, as we look down the line of our kings and observe what enormous effects almost every one of their triumphs and defeats has wrought upon our institutions. Palgrave asserts that if Harold had not fallen at Hastings there would have been no Empire, and Guizot suggests the paradox that England owes her liberties to the Norman Conquest, which ruthlessly crushed out the free institutions of the Saxons, but, in return, saved England from falling into a state of confusion inescapable had the Saxon system of polity remained. From this confusion would have arisen, first, an aristocratic hierarchy, like that which sprang up to throw dark shadows over France; next, an absolute monarchy; and, finally, a series of anarchical revolutions, repressed in turn by a military despotism. The Normans, a bold, ruthless, but capable people, by blending with the Saxons "high mettled the race," tempering its solid character with Norman fire. "Assuredly," as Gibbon has said, "England was a gainer by the Conquest." And we may agree with the French historian who remarked, "The loss of the Battle of Hastings was the first step along the road by which England has arrived to that grandeur and glory we behold at the present time."

Yes, through triumphs, defeats, and revolution the British people built better than they knew. The Barons wresting the Great Charter from the unwilling John, the union of the two kingdoms of Scotland and England with the accession of James I, the struggle of the Commons against the absolutism of Charles, the coming and the rule of Cromwell, culminating in the execution of the King, the joys, follies, profligacies, and stupidities of the Restoration, the Revolution and the flight of James II, the accession of William III, the Bill of Rights in 1689, and, lastly, the revolt of the American Colonies, are essential links in the chain of circumstances which make the British Empire possible.

If Cromwell and the Parliamentary forces had not

triumphed, Parliament would never have established its supremacy or the basis of constitutional monarchy, and those free institutions of government upon which the Empire rests, their roots going deeper and deeper into the masses of the people until the ideals of a complete democracy are realised, would have been impossible. But if the coming of Cromwell was necessary that the Empire might live and flourish, his exit from the stage was not less essential. For as there could be no Empire without complete freedom for each part of it, there could be no unity except under a king who rules but does not govern. When the Puritans cut off the head of one king, when they stood sourly aloof from the frantic welcome as his gay son returned to the throne, when James II fled into exile and William of Orange took the Crown in his stead, the English were acting with an instinct akin to genius.

III

Thus marched England's progress, till at the beginning of the nineteenth century she found herself mistress of colonies spread across the globe from the edge of the west to the edge of the east, packed with a million different kinds of embarrassing difficulties which, experience had only a few years before demonstrated, one could not dispose of with an easy offhand manner.

In 1820 the population of those Dominions did not exceed three-quarters of a million, and their overseas trade was negligible. Communications were primitive. Nobody had thought of the Pacific cable. Steamships were in the womb of the future. And the people in those remote dependencies, struggling with problems that arose peculiarly from the geography and history of their new country, scarcely lifted their eyes towards the horizon beyond which lay the vast troubled world of nations' affairs. They all looked to Britain as their motherland, and demanded of her protection from their enemies and a market for their goods.

Downing Street was not exactly benevolent. It

regarded the Colonies as a distracting but perhaps a necessary evil where English products had almost a monopoly and vast quantities of raw material necessary to British industry could be procured at will under favourable terms. There was in their minds not the remotest conception of Empire. On the contrary, they regarded the Colonies as a burden rather than as an asset, and held that the sooner they set up house for themselves the better. The idea of a Commonwealth of Free Nations, enjoying the fullest powers of self-government—many, yet one, free to go their own way, united by ties far stronger than any woven by treaties or forged by the sword—never entered their heads. They spoke of “our Colonies” as a great nobleman might speak of his estates. And as a matter of fact, seventy or eighty years ago, this was not, for all practical purposes, very far from the truth. But they neither knew nor desired to know anything about the Colonies—the idea of seeing them for themselves would have struck them as grotesque. Their attitude is aptly expressed by the young Aldous Huxley :

Then brim the bowl with atrabilious liquor
And pledge our Empire vast across the flood ;
For Blood, as all men know, than water's thicker,
But water's wider, thank the Lord, than Blood.

Nobody wanted to worry about crude places like Canada or India, where the climate was either too hot or too cold, or like Australia, where, they had heard, a creature called the kangaroo dug up dead men's bones.

But time passes, and during the nineteenth century time was more fruitful of material progress than ever before. The Colonies passed from childhood into adolescence, and began dimly to glimpse the great destiny which awaited them and the dangers that stood in their way.

In 1885 relations with Russia were very straitened. The Governments of the Colonies urgently requested the Colonial Office for advice and aid to meet the emer-

gencies they nervously expected. To advise the Colonial Secretary in these matters, the British Government formed the Colonial Defence Council, which consisted of Whitehall officials. As Professor Jebb has observed, in this congenial soil ideas of regular Imperial discussions were likely to germinate, and, as a fact, did so. In 1887—Queen Victoria's First Jubilee—was held the first Colonial Conference. It is interesting to contrast the attitude of the British Government of that day with the attitude Britain has held since 1914. The idea of the Colonies' representation was too vague to be analysed. The British Government emphasised that primarily the Conference was to discuss defence, and the Government of New South Wales, the leading colony in Australia, instructed its delegates to have nothing to do with Imperial Federation. Little resulted from the Conference, but it was a beginning. The colonial representatives met the Great Ones at whose very name men bared reverent heads, and, although a little overwhelmed, they held up their end. Then, too, they made the first hesitant step toward the equality of status and that right to an effective voice in moulding foreign policy which is now recognised by Britain, for the principle of the Colonies' responsibility in the defence of the Empire was established by an agreement that the Australian Colonies should combine to pay a subsidy for a British squadron in Australian waters. For the rest, the colonial delegates endeavoured to approach the British Government upon trade and communications, but they achieved nothing.

Seven years later—1894—the Empire held its second Conference, at the invitation of the Canadian Government, in Ottawa. A proposal to form commercial union with the United States of America had been defeated only after a very bitter fight at an election fought on the issue. The Canadian Government conceived that the best way to prevent a revival of the controversy and to ensure the political future of the Dominion was to effect mutual trade preferences within the Empire, and its representative placed this problem of Empire trade at the

head of the agenda paper. The Conference discussed inter-colonial trade preference, which they thought might lead to reciprocity with Britain also, and agreed upon the outline of a fast line of steamers to connect with Britain and a telegraph line to connect Britain with Australia by way of Canada. For this the three Governments were to go into partnership ; but nothing came of it, nor out of the scheme for preference until Mr. Joseph Chamberlain came into office.

Here we step on to a new plane in the development of the Empire, and the relations between the Dominions and Great Britain. Mr. Chamberlain was a man of courage and vision. He saw far, and he was not afraid to lead the way to the distant goal. He dreamed dreams, but devoted his life to realising them. Moreover, he had the grace of eloquence, and a determination which disappointment never blasted, and he was an excellent administrator. Into the Colonial Office he struck a new spirit. At the first Colonial Conference which he called in 1897, and at the succeeding one in 1902, he showed, however, that in some things he misinterpreted the feelings of the Dominions. As a step towards Imperial Federation, he suggested a tentative Imperial Council. He argued, too, that the Colonies ought to support Britain's Navy. But the Dominions received these proposals coldly. They would have none of the Imperial Council, which they regarded as the beginning of Imperial Federation. The Commonwealth of Australia renewed the naval agreement (a subsidy of £250,000 per annum), but beyond that things remained as they were. The result of this Conference dismayed those who, deceived by the spontaneous loyalty of the Dominions in sending contingents to the South African War, had imagined that the time was ripe for the grand scheme upon which they had set their hearts.

In 1903 Mr. Chamberlain resigned from the Government to lead the campaign for tariff reform. His was the first attempt by a British statesman to understand and accommodate the nationalist imperialism of the Colonies.

They were young nations, proud of their membership of the Empire, but proud, too, of their achievements and jealous of their rights of self-government. They would accept no scheme of Empire development that did not recognise their national independence as a permanent factor in the relations of the Empire. In official circles and amongst those who, having discovered the British Empire, were full of enthusiasm and felt that it needed but a few touches of their master-hand to bring it into the fullness of its glorious destiny, there was bitter disappointment. The rude comments to their erudite disquisitions upon the Empire, What it was, and ought to, and would most certainly be, "if the principles of wise and far-seeing statesmanship were applied" under their supervision, cut them to the heart. They felt that this reception arose from ignorance and prejudice. And so they proposed a campaign to enlighten those who walked in dark places, and to inspire with lofty ideals those whose limited outlook formed an almost insurmountable barrier to the realisation of their fondest hopes. It was recognised that the proposal to substitute for the Imperial Conference, which by this time had become an institution, an advisory council and a permanent secretariat, would need most careful handling. Canada, scenting in this an attempt to establish Imperial ascendancy, promptly rejected it. Australia, under Mr. Deakin, was willing to consider the proposal if it could be adapted to the principles of local autonomy.

At the Imperial Conference of 1907 Mr. Deakin, backed by Sir Joseph Ward and Dr. (afterwards Sir Starr) Jameson, pressed the idea vigorously. They proposed in effect to preserve the Conference as a congress of Governments, but to establish, so that its work might continue between sessions, a joint and permanent secretariat on which the Governments, represented severally by their own nominees, would all enjoy the same rights of approval and discussion. Although nothing came of this suggestion at the time, the seed did not fall on quite stony ground, for we shall hear of it again, though we

are scarcely likely to see it at work. In his opening address to the Conference Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman laid down an important principle. He declared that the cost of naval defence and the responsibility for conducting foreign policy hung together. In the opinion of the British Government, none of the Dominions was paying enough money to the British Admiralty to justify claims to a voice in foreign policy. Despite this, however, the Dominions criticised rather severely the policy of Britain upon the New Hebrides Convention and the Newfoundland Fisheries dispute.

Between the 1907 and 1911 Conferences the first dark shadows of the world-war projected themselves over Empire affairs. The dramatic declaration of Sir Edward (now Lord) Grey, the most peace-loving of men, that the British Navy would have to be practically rebuilt, had startled the whole Empire. Sir Edward was of all men the least likely to indulge in scaremongering; he was almost a Little Englander. Such a statement from such a man created alarm, and Australia and New Zealand offered their assistance, and even in Canada a section of the people demanded similar action.

A subsidiary conference of naval experts was called to draw up a scheme of Empire Naval Defence. The Australian and Canadian Governments rejected the principle of centralised control, which was the basis of all schemes for Imperial Federation. They preferred in principle a scheme, approved by the Admiralty, for re-establishing naval power in the Pacific by fleet units which the Dominions might create and their Governments continue to control until, in emergencies, they might decide to hand them over to the senior Admiralty. By this means they hoped to acquire a real and effective voice in foreign policy, because once the fleet units were created, no British Government could afford to take any important step without being sure that its naval allies concurred. It was natural that between parties so intimately related, whose interest in immediate action was vital, the scheme in principle and in detail should

have been adjusted to the circumstances and conditions of united control. The types of vessels and armaments in all the fleet units were to be dovetailed into one another, training and tactics were to be uniform, constant interchanges of personnel were to be arranged. When the units met, the senior Admiral would take command.

Of all the Dominions, Australia alone carried the policy into action. The Deakin Government vacillated, and, deciding at last upon a scheme to add a Dreadnought to the North Sea Fleet, had gone to the electors on this programme and had been soundly beaten. The Labour Party, standing for Australian nationalism, believed that there was no more effective way of kindling its spirit than by creating an Australian-owned and controlled Navy which in time of war would co-operate with and for all practical purposes be merged into the British or Empire Navy. With this view the Australian people agreed, and returned the Labour Party with a substantial majority in both Houses. New Zealand's proffered battleship was earmarked for a fleet unit which Britain would provide on the China station as part of the scheme for a Pacific Fleet. South Africa felt unable to do anything, pending the completion of the Union. Although there was a widespread feeling in Canada that something ought to be done, racial and party differences prevented any move to form a Dominion Fleet unit. And it was not until the spring of 1911 that, the Laurier Naval Act having been passed, a beginning was made with what Professor Jebb calls this "wholly inadequate scheme."

The Conference of 1911, the last of what may be termed the old order of Empire congresses, dealt with a somewhat ambitious agenda. It was responsible, amongst other things, for the first concrete proposal for Imperial Federation, which came, curiously enough, not from Great Britain, but from New Zealand. Sir Joseph Ward advanced it upon a notice of motion which indicated nothing new in the idea itself. It proposed to create in London a Colonial Council, which would advise the British Government upon matters that affected the

Dominions. (Mr. Deakin, Prime Minister of Australia, had suggested much the same thing in 1907.) The scheme would leave intact the autonomy of the Dominions; the suggested Council was to be advisory of the British Government alone. But Professor Jebb declares that on the voyage over this acorn became a mighty oak, and, in short, when Sir Joseph put his proposal before the Conference, it was a full-blown Imperial Parliament and executive they were asked to accept. As might have been expected, the Conference was entirely hostile. To the other Dominions the proposal seemed rank heresy. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith,¹ a most logically minded man whose knowledge of the Empire was quite negligible, and who made it a point to be at least a quarter of a century behind the times, ridiculed the idea of equal representation in the proposed Imperial Senate, and bluntly declared that "Britain could not share the control of foreign affairs with the Dominions." And that was the end of the first concrete attempt to realise the Imperial Federation ideal. Sir Joseph was ill-advised to father the proposal. Such magnificent schemes are, anyway, foredoomed to failure, and it may fairly be said that the Dominions will never agree to any proposal which impairs or even seems to impair their powers of self-government. And this (*mutatis mutandis*) applies to Britain alone.

Now, the 1911 Conference is noteworthy not only for having rejected Sir Joseph's scheme for a Federal Parliament, but also for Mr. Asquith's declaration that Britain could not share her control of foreign affairs with the Dominions. In the light of what has happened since, this statement of Britain's attitude is most interesting and instructive. When we look at what was, and then turn to what is, the attitude of British Governments in this matter, and remember that the revolutionary change in outlook occupied less than seven years, we begin to realise how amazingly the Empire is adapted to change its relationships without disturbing the even flow of

¹ Afterwards Lord Oxford and Asquith.

national and Imperial affairs and almost without notice. When we look, too, at the developments wrought in these last few years, we realise what an enormously difficult task it would be to forecast the future of so vast an Empire whose adaptability to changing environment is not less remarkable than its stability.

When Britain realised that the Dominions resented their exclusion from consultation on matters which affected them so vitally, the question was raised in the House of Commons, and someone suggested that at the Conference representatives of the Dominions should be enlightened upon the foreign policy of Britain and the situation of foreign affairs generally. The Colonial Secretary replied that this would be done at the special meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Why, if it was to be done at all it was to be done in this way, he did not explain. But of course those in the select circles of permanent officialdom felt, with the ruling mandarins, that any passion for information and consultation must be firmly suppressed. As, owing to the stupid prejudices of the British public, it could not be suppressed openly, they proposed to administer a soothing syrup and to follow up this treatment, whilst the patient was in a state of vacuous beatitude, by swearing him to secrecy upon all that had taken place, including the manner in which decisions had been arrived at. In this way all decisions would appear to be unanimous ; the Dominions would be precluded from explaining what had happened and be compelled to support a policy they might have strongly opposed.

Mr. Asquith, who loved doing nothing, strictly according to precedent fell back with great dignity upon the Committee of Imperial Defence as the most effective means of maintaining centralised control. This Committee had been created by Mr. Arthur Balfour (now Lord Balfour) to co-ordinate naval and military policy, to advise on technical questions of defence at the request of the British or any Dominions Government, and to bring them into personal touch with defence experts.

It was entirely under the control of the British Prime Minister. It resembled the War Cabinet—about which we shall speak later—in this, that it had no regular personnel. Only those attended who were invited, to any meeting, by the Prime Minister.

That such a Committee was at times very convenient to the British Government is obvious. If a thing had to be done, the doing of which might arouse opposition, the support of naval and military experts would be most useful. And Dominion delegates were either to be hypnotised by the great experts revealing the most confidential secrets the Prime Minister considered would most usefully effect his purpose, or, if they developed unexpected powers of resistance, be out-voted—as of course they would be, since the Prime Minister issued his invitations judiciously—and the weight of their authority be added to the authority of the experts.

Soon after the 1907 Conference the British Government provisionally accepted the Declaration of London without consulting the Dominions. The matter was set down on the agenda paper of the 1911 Conference for discussion—Professor Jebb says by Australia. As I remember the circumstances, the Conference discussed a motion affirming in general terms the right of the Dominions to be consulted and complaining of the neglect of the British Government to do this. The Declaration of London may have evoked it, but one thing is certain: the Australian Prime Minister had no intention of opposing the ratification of the Declaration when he left Australia. While he was *en route*, however, he received a cable notifying him that the Australian Government most strongly opposed the ratification, and asking that the Australian delegates should vote against it.

Now, I think Professor Jebb is right in supposing that if the Declaration of London had been discussed in such a committee instead of the Imperial Conference, nobody would have heard about the dissent of the Australian Government, and the House of Lords would have had to consider the question of ratification, having the rejection

of the Declaration without the support of the action of the Australian Government before it. Anyway, Mr. Asquith, to whom those wretched conferences must have been torture, saw with his acute and well-balanced mind that there would be much trouble if the Dominion delegates were allowed to bring their crude ideas of world-affairs inside the portals of the sacred place where the Great Ones carried on in quiet seclusion the affairs of the Empire. So he turned to the Imperial Defence Committee—a body that had no being save at his will, composed of men who naturally looked upon the British Government as not only the keystone of the arch but the entire building—with quiet confidence. He proposed to transfer all matters of defence and foreign policy from the Conference to the Committee.

Professor Jebb considers this a master-stroke of reactionary policy. But perhaps he is a little hard upon these poor fellows. Governments have to carry on the business of the country. They take little thought of schemes, no matter how flawless these may be. Government is at best a difficult and too often a thankless task. When one comes to look at the matter from the standpoint of the British Government, one can hardly censure Mr. Asquith for following along the well-beaten track. The British Empire had come from obscurity to greatness under the system of centralised control that he sought to preserve. Until the hour when a radical change became unavoidable, he might well be excused for thinking that any departure from this was dangerous, and might be fatal. When all is said and done, no one will deny that centralised unity of control is superior to divided control, and where power is distributed amongst men scattered over all the world, or representatives who must take their instructions from such men, unity of action becomes difficult, if not impossible.

When we come to consider foreign affairs as they are presented to the Foreign Office day by day, we shall see how futile is the talk of giving Dominions an effective share in moulding and directing the policy of a world-

empire by information issued at triennial conferences and decisions made after discussion upon the state of affairs as disclosed then. The government of an Empire cannot be carried on by men scattered over all the earth,¹ and although the general principles of a foreign policy may be agreed upon, the application of these principles to ever-changing conditions must rest with one authority. There must always be someone on the bridge, and to him and him alone—subject to general sailing directions—the man at the wheel must look for orders.

In part, the British Government's task of putting the Dominions in their proper place was supported by Canada's Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whose attitude toward foreign policy was what one might expect from his political environment. As he told the Conference, Sir Wilfrid did not desire the British Government to consult the Canadian Government except in matters which peculiarly affected the Dominions. He believed that there was no vital connection between the general foreign policy of Britain and that of Canada. The Canadian Government intended to shape its own policy in its own way, steadily avoiding the vortex of European militarism.

Looking over the results of the 1911 Conference in the light of what went before and what has happened since, I do not think one can fairly say that it was more barren than any of those which preceded it. Professor Jebb says it was a triumph for reaction; but I do not agree. What went ye out for to see? What was expected from the Conference? Imperial Federation in whole or in part? If not that, what precisely could the Conference have done more than it did? With Canada hanging back in the traces, Britain could hardly be blamed if she deemed the time not ripe for great changes. We are all too prone to expect that things shall be done which bring Imperial relations more in harmony with our conception of Empire. When they do not, we speak of reaction. But consider the progress of the last

¹ But see Chapter XI, p. 265.

two generations. It has been very rapid and steady. In 1887 the influence of the Dominions was negligible. In 1911 it was very considerable. Every step forward had been taken so steadily and was so obviously an adjustment necessary to meet changing circumstances that it had given satisfaction without exciting criticism or even provoking much comment. Yet looking back over the years, it is clear that the sum of these gentle movements of the great Imperial organism amounted to a revolution of things as they had been. And one point needs special emphasis: the Dominions had won every advance at the expense of a concession by Britain. The Dominions had gained power; Britain had lost what they had gained. At the beginning of the period under review Britain was in theory and in fact the unchallenged overlord of the Empire. In 1911, although not yet stripped of all trappings of power, she stood upon the threshold of the position she occupies to-day, when she is merely *primus inter pares*, and, so far as the theory of Empire-relations goes, has given all she has to give. This stage having been reached, Oliver Twist's celebrated battle-cry becomes a little inappropriate. What then is to be done?

But to return to the 1911 Conference. Mr. Asquith, seeing that Britain was asked to abandon the hitherto unchallenged power in the vast area of foreign affairs where her interests were immeasurably wider than those of the Dominions, more complex, more difficult and delicate, thought it time to call a halt. In this he was supported, as we have seen, by Canada, and of course by the men under whose guidance the Empire had become a dominant power. They were naturally averse from sharing their most difficult and complex task, which required great experience and tact, with raw, untrained men. They honestly felt that it was best for the whole Empire that there should be undivided control of foreign affairs. In this they were, of course, right. They were, however, wrong to suppose that undivided control could be ensured only by leaving things as they

were and trusting to Britain. Such a conception of Empire was out of tune with the times. The idea of an Empire where the Dominions played the part of men quite content with a Government in which they could not hope to share, though its mistakes were liable to overwhelm them, was not likely to captivate a people fired by a passionate spirit of democracy.

The delegates seem to have been greatly impressed by the manner in which they were received, and by the opening addresses of Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. McKenna. The dignity with which Mr. Asquith invested speech and action and his masterly references to the tremendous responsibilities of the Elder Statesmen of the Empire seem indeed to have almost overwhelmed some of the overseas representatives. In whatever mood they came to the Conference, all save one or two were soon subdued to a sense of the intellectual greatness, wisdom, and capacity of the men in whose hands the destiny of this mighty Empire had been so providentially placed. And in their presence they felt that criticism would have been little short of blasphemy. They turned away their dazzled eyes and obeyed. But as all were not of this frame of mind, the work of the Conference proceeded along the lines originally laid down, and did some useful work.

Sir Edward Grey's review of foreign affairs had been most comprehensive. The vastness and complexity of the Empire's interests, depicted in lucid, graphic language, gave the overseas representatives a vivid idea of the difficulties with which the Foreign Office had to deal. And after analysing every significant current in the world's affairs, he directed attention to a point that in the light of subsequent events proved vitally important. He reminded members that the period for which the Anglo-Japanese Treaty had been made would expire in 1914 and that, unless renewed, it would terminate altogether in 1915. He strongly recommended the Conference to renew the treaty. The policy of the Dominions upon immigration would not

be affected in any way and, in his opinion, the position in the Far East would be much easier and the safety of the Dominions, and in particular that of Australia and New Zealand, more effectively secured by such a policy. After some discussion, the Conference approved the renewal of the treaty.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the effects of this decision upon the fortunes of the Empire and the events which followed the outbreak of war in 1914. Looking back, our imagination baulks before the situation of Britain and her Dominions as it well might have been in 1915 if Japan, instead of remaining a firm ally, bound under the terms of a treaty which imposed upon her obligations to protect British interests in the Pacific, had stood at our gates as a potential enemy. And that she might in the circumstances have been an enemy is undeniable. The Japanese are a most sensitive people, resenting any real or fancied affront to their national dignity. The refusal to renew a treaty,¹ the terms of which she had honourably observed for so many years, would at the best have created a coolness, and would have stirred her to greater activity in ship-building, so that the Japanese Navy might attain a strength commensurate with her interests and the ambitions of her people.

And even if Japan should have elected to remain neutral in the great struggle—which is more than doubtful—Britain would have been compelled to detach a strong squadron from the Grand Fleet that it might stand by for any eventualities. When we remember the position in 1915 and how it developed—the Gallipoli campaign, the Australian and New Zealand troops convoyed by Japanese warships, the Palestine campaign, the fighting in Mesopotamia, the long, bitter, and bloody struggle in France and Flanders, the dark and dreadful days when we escaped disaster by a miracle of heroism and super-human effort, how evenly the forces were divided, what

¹ Vide Chapter VII: "The 1921 Conference: Disarmament and Anglo-Japanese Treaty."

a little it needed to have turned the scale—when we recall all that the command of the sea meant, the part the Dominion forces played in achieving victory, the blood runs cold in our veins as we think what might have happened if the Japanese Navy, instead of convoying Australian and New Zealand soldiers to the war zone and policing the waters of the Pacific, had been hostile or even neutral. How many Australian or New Zealand soldiers would have gone abroad in such circumstances? What effect would the detachment of a powerful squadron from the British naval forces have meant to that complete command of the sea which was so powerful in frustrating the efforts of the enemy? What would this have meant during the crisis of the submarine campaign, when Britain was within an ace of being starved into surrender?

Certainly, whatever else the Conference did or did not do, we ought to be devoutly thankful that it was so wisely guided in this vitally important affair. If ever the fortunes of the Empire lay upon the knees of the gods, they surely did that day.

For the Dominions that Conference of 1911 rounded off an epoch. Professor Jebb, writing in 1913, speaks enthusiastically of the Dominions' contribution to the Boer War, and regards them as unanswerable arguments why the Dominions should have an effective voice in shaping foreign policy. He could not foresee, of course, how time was to strengthen their claim. Within the next five years they placed a million troops in the field, and did more than their share to save the Empire from the debacle which threatened her.

CHAPTER II

THE CATAclysm

WAR came like a cataclysm, blotting light out of all the world and crumbling ancient institutions like card houses.

The Dominions turned with astonishment towards Europe. When they learned that Germany had violated Belgian neutrality, they listened impatiently for Britain's answer, and with intense satisfaction greeted her decision to fight.

The Dominion Governments, who received the cables notifying them that a state of war existed from August 4th, knew little beyond what they learned from the press. It is hard to see how the Imperial Government could have consulted them, for the situation was kaleidoscopic, changing from hour to hour. Indeed, it would have been impossible, before acting, to explain the position clearly, code and dispatch the telegram, and wait until the Dominion Governments had called their Cabinets together and, after discussion, replied. To have done this might have—would have been, in fact—fatal to the Empire. In any case, one could hardly expect that the British Government should await the concurrence of the Dominions before doing that upon which the existence of Britain and the Empire depended. Somebody had to take the responsibility, and all looked to Britain. Her interests, involved equally with the interests of the Dominions, were immeasurably greater. The danger was at her very doors. Honour and prudence both pointed clearly the way she should go. She had by a treaty solemnly guaranteed Belgium against invasion ; the legions of Germany—a signatory of the same

treaty—were streaming across the Belgian frontiers, and Belgium, overwhelmed, called upon Britain for that protection she had pledged herself to provide. To refuse would cover Britain with eternal shame, and could at best postpone that dread day when she must pit herself against that great military power which, inflamed by dreams of world-conquest, had long avowed her destruction, and for two generations had been steadily preparing to achieve it. Inaction invited disaster, in which the whole Empire would be involved. She did all that was humanly possible to preserve peace, and only when she found no alternative did she declare war. Thus the Empire stepped out of its peaceful noontide, where everything breathed an atmosphere of happy promise, into a bedlam of despair and savage hatred.

Australia's response to the news was immediate and enthusiastic. No one complained because we were not consulted. The Empire was at war; it was unprovoked on our part, and, as we saw it, deliberate on the part of the enemy. There was only one thing to do. To your tents, O Israel! The men poured into the enlistment depots in tens of thousands. The community concentrated its energies on preparations for war. They laid aside the pleasures and works of peace-time, and turned every gift and talent and taste to the enormous task of chasing calamity out of the world by achieving an early victory. The Empire shuddered under the awakening of emotions which press a people closely together in days of crisis, and the Dominions stiffened themselves to bear suffering, sacrifice, loss, death. Nobody even thought of defeat.

The declaration of war surprised Australia in the middle of an appeal to the people. The campaign had screwed up party feeling intensely. For the first time in the history of the Commonwealth there had been a dissolution of the two Chambers. The Liberal Government had appealed to the electors to resolve a situation they found intolerable. They had a majority of only one in the popular chamber, and were in a hopeless

minority in the Senate. Both parties felt confident. The uproar was deafening the country when suddenly the war burst with a clamour that, like the voice of Jove, stilled all others. The effect was profound. The parties with one accord declared themselves in favour of Britain's attitude, and pledged themselves, if returned to power, to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. Prominent men in the Labour Party suggested that the election should be put aside, the Liberal Government to remain in office, and parties to be returned to the new Parliament in the same strength as the old. The Liberals could not accept this proposal, but at a meeting of the leaders, called in Melbourne to consider steps necessary to deal with the extraordinary situation arising out of the war, each party pledged itself publicly to support whomever was returned with a majority. The people gave the Labour Party an overwhelming majority in each House.

This spirit prevailed throughout the Empire. Everything was subordinated to the task of preparing for the great struggle. In Australia the machinery of Universal Compulsory Military Training, with its training-college for officers, its school for non-commissioned officers, its area officers, its small-arms factory, its ammunition factories, and its thousands of trainees, placed at the disposal of the authorities a most effective instrument for military organisation. The Australian Navy was in good shape too, and almost immediately ready for sea. This ensured the safety of the great cities, and over a wide sector of the Pacific Ocean the freedom of sea-borne commerce. It ensured, too, the protection of the islands, and made possible the capture of German New Guinea. Later the Navy was to drive the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* from the Southern Pacific and form part of the naval escort for Australian troops to Gallipoli, Egypt, Palestine, France, and Flanders.

But all these things, have not historians of the war written them ? and are they not graven indelibly in the memories of the British peoples in every corner of the seas ? It suffices for our purpose to emphasise the fact

that after the Dominions had through many years clamoured for the right to be informed and consulted upon all matters vital to their interests, they found themselves, without a moment's notice, swept into a savage struggle arising, technically at all events, out of a treaty of which not one out of every ten thousand had ever heard, and about the terms of which none of the Dominions had been consulted, a treaty made, indeed, before any of them were Dominions at all. No one was to blame. All were the sport of malign fate or the destined victims of an unspeakable conspiracy. It was no use talking about the matter until victory had been won; but people generally resolved that "it must never happen again."

Cables passed freely enough between the Colonial Office and the Dominions from the outbreak of hostilities. I have seen all that came to the Commonwealth of Australia from the moment war was just a disquieting hint until the end. We may fairly assume, for all practical purposes, that similar cables went to all the Dominions. I am not going to say very much about them, but two points I must emphasise: first, that they were usually belated; and secondly, that they left a great deal unsaid. There were numerous delays during the darkest days of the war, when cables from the Colonial Office took from twelve to twenty hours to reach the seat of government in Australia. When one remembers that the Foreign Office and later the Prime Minister's Secretariat supplied the Colonial Office telegrams upon the war (sometimes the message was drafted by the Foreign Office and merely transmitted, after having been coded, by the Colonial Office), and that the machinery for ciphering and dispatching was—I do not say is still—attuned to methods of the old colonial days of the early Victorian era, it can be easily understood why what the Dominion Governments knew about the situation left much to be desired.

II

In 1916 the British Government invited the Dominion Prime Ministers to discuss the situation in London. I

arrived in March; the Prime Ministers of the other Dominions were unable to attend. The Coalition Government was in office, with Mr. Asquith (Lord Oxford) as Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law leading the Unionist wing as Colonial Secretary, and Mr. Lloyd George in the Ministry for Munitions. The situation was very bad. The people were extremely uneasy, suspecting that things were not going well. What exactly was wrong they did not generally understand. The Northcliffe press had begun that campaign against the Government and its fatuous policy of "Wait and see" which ultimately brought about the downfall of Mr. Asquith and effected a complete revolution in the output of munitions and in wartime organisation. In March 1916, however, there was for all practical purposes no organisation worthy of the name. The Kitchener Army scheme was moving well; the men were enrolling in large numbers, and they were being drilled. But they could be neither armed nor clad; machine guns, heavy guns, ammunitions, railway material, were appallingly inadequate. If Britain had been engaged in tribal war on a grand scale, the organisation might have sufficed; in a life-and-death struggle against the greatest military Power in history, a Power that was flooding upon the world vast hordes of men, armed and equipped with the latest weapons, reinforced by apparently unlimited supplies of heavy artillery and high explosives, with ten times as many machine guns as the British, the organisation was pathetically, tragically inadequate.

The Government was, I think, a little at a loss to know what to do with me. Just what was in its mind when it issued the invitations to all the Dominion Prime Ministers I do not know. Probably it was thinking of a sort of Imperial Conference, at which the Prime Minister would fully inform the overseas representatives of the general position, assisted by statements from the Secretary for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty upon the naval and military situations. Having heard everything and feeling profoundly impressed by the

gravity of the situation, the vastness and the complexity of the operations, and the almost superhuman ability of the men in charge, they would then return to their homes to sound the praises of the great statesmen in charge of Empire affairs and urge their respective Dominions to even more intense efforts. Whatever was in Mr. Asquith's mind, circumstances proved too strong for him and took a turn he had not anticipated.

I made several speeches which attracted considerable attention, and there was a general demand that I should be included in the Cabinet. At last I was summoned to attend a meeting, and, taking my place around the table in the ordinary way, participated in the discussions as if I had been a member of the British Government. As I was a visitor, however, I enjoyed the honour of a seat at the right of the Prime Minister.

At the outset the Imperial Cabinet was just the ordinary British Cabinet to which the Dominion Prime Ministers—or one of them—had been invited. The questions discussed were not confined to those which concerned the Empire as a whole, although of course during the war that might be said of almost every matter. But without exception they were questions in which Britain had preponderant interests, questions that would have been determined in normal times by the British Cabinet itself without reference to the Dominions. We considered not only problems raised by military operations in zones where British forces were engaged, but measures for war-time organisation of the civilian population. Two examples will illustrate the kind of affairs upon which I was asked to express an opinion. There were, I think, four divisions of British troops at Salonika, but no Dominion troops, and certainly no Australians. The War Office recommended that the British divisions should be withdrawn, and the Minister and his Chief of Staff appeared to support the recommendation. Then the British Minister for Agriculture suggested a scheme to encourage wheat-growing and ensure food-supplies by guaranteeing a fixed price on all wheat grown on new

lands in Britain. These matters, although they indirectly affected the Dominions, were clearly within the exclusive jurisdiction of Britain. But I registered my opinions upon them as though I were a Minister of the British Cabinet, or as I would have done had the problems arisen before the Commonwealth Cabinet from Australian troops and Australian production. I may add that although I supported the minority in each discussion, one proposal was very substantially modified and the other overwhelmingly rejected. The second proposal, indeed, had so little support that, except, I think, for one other besides myself, the Minister found himself entirely without backing.

It may fairly be said that Mr. Asquith was not so enamoured of the reception of what no doubt appeared to him as a most courteous gesture towards the Dominions as to make him eager to issue regular invitations and thus crystallise into an institution that which he could only regard as a most unfortunate experiment. But his custom was to do everything in a grand manner. So other invitations came along—at spacious intervals intended to make it clear that one must regard what he had done as an act of courtesy rather than an established practice. The Dominion representative attended when he was invited. When he was not, he just hung round or went through the country making speeches which roused the populace by urging action in place of the debilitating policy of “Wait and see.” In these circumstances it was very difficult to ignore him. The times were so sadly out of joint that the situation was no longer, as in the good old days, well in hand ; events kept on happening with such bewildering variety and appalling rapidity that the British Prime Minister felt himself swept away like a fugitive straw on a storm-swollen stream.

Everything was going awry. The public, adjured in the best English to “wait and see,” saw nothing but one long, unrelieved series of reverses in the field and dispiriting evidence of blundering incapacity and masterly inactivity at home. Mr. Asquith came in for a good deal

of censure. As a matter of fact he was temperamentally unfitted to lead the Empire in war. He looked upon action as a kind of disease to be avoided by every legitimate means. Indeed, when he had spoken of a thing that ought to be done, it was to him the same as if the thing had been done. In Cabinet he was of all men the least prejudiced. No one insisted less upon his own views. He listened with unmoved patience to every opinion, summing up with judicial impartiality all that was said, but almost invariably deciding for that course which involved the least action. He had plenty of courage, but avoided conflict except as a last resource, and he was the very soul of honour. He held very strong views on the Fiscal question as it had been understood twenty-five years ago, but he never intruded these unduly upon others. He regarded advocacy of Tariff Reform, for example, as an unmistakable sign of intellectual weakness, but he good-naturedly tolerated it, listened courteously to the opinions of the reformers, and, under pressure of irresistible force, he was even driven to support his heresies. But his opinion remained unaltered.

He is of course a familiar type of Englishman, a most admirable type—in peace-time. He had all the great virtues, a fine and catholic taste in literature, and a considerable experience of men. But life terrified him. He could bear to regard it from a library window, and as it stalked between the black lines of a book he could meet and deal with it. As long as its reactions were orthodox he could apply to it the academic rules, but when precedent and the experience of his ancestors seemed to be inadequate for a situation he sank into a gentlemanly melancholy and looked injured. He was perhaps too perfectly civilised.

When the proposal was made for an Economic Conference at Paris, his attitude was at first distinctly unencouraging. Later, bending with unshaken dignity to the howling storm, he announced in the Commons that Britain would be represented, but, asked what the policy of the Government would be, he very adroitly tripped up

his rude interrogator by a bland declaration that "the British Government's representatives would be lookers-on. They would note everything, but say nothing." Unhappily, the trouble was not over. The people clamoured for a policy and for a Dominion representative on the British delegation. The Prime Minister of Australia was the only Dominion Prime Minister in Britain, and it was feared that time did not permit of others to be available. To give representation to one only might be misunderstood, and certainly the Prime Minister of Australia could not represent other Dominions. Mr. Asquith hoped that this would resolve a most embarrassing situation. But the people insisted that as there could not be a Dominion representative on the delegation, a Dominion representative should go as one of the representatives of Britain. This view prevailed, and the delegation was made up of two British representatives and two Dominion representatives, Sir George Foster, of Canada, having been prevailed upon to come over.

Mr. Asquith, vastly experienced in statecraft, although considerably perturbed by the manner in which events were shaping, announced that the British delegation would vote as a unit, as one never knew what conferences like this might do. This simple and salutary procedure, he hoped, would spare the British Government any more embarrassment and humiliation. But although a very strong advocate of the principle of British delegates voting solidly after settling their differences amongst themselves, I was unable to accept the suggestion; I held that the circumstances were unusual. The Government had deliberately declared that it had no policy, that it was simply a looker-on, and this being so I could not represent Britain unless free to express my opinion and register my vote according to my convictions, which, as everyone knew, supported those who believed in imposing an economic blockade upon Germany and utilising to the full the tremendous advantages a command of the sea and the possession of abundant supplies of raw materials

gave to the Empire and its Allies. In the end he conceded this point—that we should vote and speak as we pleased. As a matter of fact, the delegation cast a solid vote on everything, supporting very strongly the famous Paris resolutions, which, by the irony of fate, Mr. Asquith was called upon to defend in the House and pledge his Government to support.

Meanwhile the war dragged on. Mr. Asquith continued to wait, and the front continued to offer nothing that one would wish to see. The people and the press were restive, the optimists had apparently taken flight to winter quarters. Everybody had given up expecting that the war would end next year, and men settled down solidly to small meals and hard work. The armies seemed to have dug themselves in so firmly that nothing short of the Doomsday deluge would shift them. We all wished devoutly that something would happen.

Suddenly it did. England got the man she wanted. Mr. Asquith—not without enormous subconscious relief, one feels sure—gave the crushing task of leadership over to Mr. Lloyd George.

CHAPTER III

THE DOMINIONS COME OF AGE

THE accession of Mr. Lloyd George was an event of transcendent importance to the Empire and to its Allies, and marked the beginning of a new era in the relations between Britain and the Dominions. He came into power at the most critical juncture in the history of the Empire, when the British people were depressed and the fortunes of the Allies at a low ebb. Although the war had been raging for two years, the resources of Britain were still unorganised. Many things had been done, but they were not an integral part of any plan. The circumstances were without precedent : the ship of State had broken loose from its ancient moorings and was adrift in a furious gale ; the old landmarks had disappeared ; but Mr. Asquith had continued to act as though it was still tied up to the wharf in a dead calm.

The nation needed a leader, but Mr. Asquith could not even follow quickly enough to keep the nation in sight. It needed a man with vision, and it had one whose mind was fast rooted in the dead past. It wanted a man to whom action was easier than speech, and it had one who regarded words not only as a substitute for deeds, but as action itself.

No wonder the people of Britain were inexpressibly relieved when this eloquent, courteous, honourable man, whom an unkind destiny had projected into a world which passionately, savagely, demanded a leader who could and would, if needs be, drive it with whips through the horrors of the dark valley in which the legions of hell had been let loose to the victory which was the only alternative

to death and dishonour, surrendered the reins of power to Mr. Lloyd George.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Mr. Lloyd George saved Britain and the Empire—certainly no one man did so much to prevent the defeat of the Allies. He organised the wonderful resources of Britain. He inspired confidence in its armies and the civil population. His imagination soared above the dark and dreadful clouds of war; his voice rallied the wavering and despondent hosts. In darkness he saw light; in the hour of greatest danger he predicted victory. He was not merely a man of vision, a man to whom the conventional outlook was less than nothing, but above all a man of action. He never troubled about what had been; he was concerned only with what was to be. He did not look back, but forwards. He was always projecting his thoughts into the future and with demoniac energy striving to translate them into instruments of victory. Mr. Asquith had read a very great deal; Mr. Lloyd George had read very little: some held that against him, but perhaps it was one of his greatest strengths. The times were without precedent, and I have never met one so free of preconceived notions and prejudices. He made up his own mind. If he had read more he would have been perhaps less free.

Britain was gasping in a desperate struggle against a nation that, swearing her destruction, had enlisted every mechanical invention and discovery of science to that end. And for two years the people had suffered excruciatingly a policy of "Wait and see," projected by a man who was constitutionally incapable of looking upon the greatest upheaval in the world's history with more than a tragic belief that Britain would somehow "muddle through."

It is unlikely that the Dominions would have come of age in the counsels of the Empire as soon as they did if Mr. Asquith had remained in office. The idea of an Imperial War Cabinet was conceived before he went out of office, and no doubt, if circumstances had permitted,

the Government would have invited the Dominion Prime Ministers to assemble in London the following year for consultation. But that the evolution of the Imperial Cabinet would have followed along the lines it did under the leadership of Mr. Lloyd George is very doubtful—in any case, it would have proceeded much less rapidly.

However that may be, Mr. Lloyd George summoned the Dominion Prime Ministers who had come to Britain for consultation to a meeting of the Imperial Cabinet in March 1917. As far as I can recollect, Mr. Asquith's summons to me in March 1916 was to a meeting of the Cabinet over which he usually presided, that is to say, the British Cabinet. It is true that some of the press reports used the term "Imperial"; it was nevertheless clearly enough the British Cabinet. I was a visitor—given an honoured place, invited to take part in discussions, treated with the utmost courtesy, but still a visitor, a guest on a different footing from the others present. But in the 1917 meetings all were in this, as in other essentials, upon the same footing.

The 1917 Cabinet differed from that of 1916 in several ways. In Mr. Asquith's time the number of Ministers entitled to, or who did as a matter of practice, attend Cabinet meetings was large. Speaking from memory, I should say there were over twenty at the first meeting in which I sat. The Lloyd George Cabinet was a small body which could be enlarged at will by including experts or others, whether members of the Government or not, whom it was desirable to consult. The men called in counsel were many, the men who decided very few.

This Imperial War Cabinet was for all practical purposes the British War Cabinet, to which the Dominion Prime Ministers had been added. When Mr. Lloyd George opened the first Imperial Cabinet in March 1917, fourteen members of the Cabinet were present, and of these eight represented Britain and six the Dominions. All the Dominions were represented except Australia. And, in addition to the members of the Cabinet, the Maharajah of Bikanir and Lord Sinha, Lord Carson

(First Lord of the Admiralty), Lord Jellicoe (First Sea Lord), and Major-General Maurice (Director-General of Military Operations), two Canadian Ministers, and the official members of the Colonial Office and the Secretariat, headed by Sir Maurice Hankey and including Mr. L. S. Amery (the Right Hon. L. S. Amery), the present Secretary of State for the Dominions, were there.

The Secretariat was an innovation. Reporters attended the proceedings, except secret sessions when naval and military affairs were dealt with. Speeches were generally reported verbatim in exactly the same way as the speeches of Parliament, and the members received a proof the following day that they might make corrections. Resolutions and decisions of the Cabinet were recorded and printed. Everything was conducted in a businesslike way. It has to be noted that while the Imperial Cabinet was in session, although not usually on the actual sitting days, an Imperial Conference was dealing with many questions of great importance, some of which had been referred to it by the Cabinet. The Conference frequently explored and examined proposals submitted either by the Cabinet or by British or Dominion Ministers. When it had done this, the Conference made its report and sometimes its recommendation to the Cabinet, which then decided what should be done. In practice this method of conducting business was very convenient, for it relieved the Cabinet of much labour, and furnished a means of carrying out the committee work essential to the effective dispatch of public business.

In effect, save for the absence of the Prime Minister from the chair, the Conference was a more numerous Cabinet, or rather, perhaps, a Cabinet Committee, reinforced by experts and officials. As the Imperial Cabinet also was sitting, although not at the same hour, the decisions of the Conference were regarded as recommendations. Otherwise the business was carried on in precisely the same way as when the Conference was the only Empire instrumentality. The experiment of setting

up an "Imperial War Cabinet" must be regarded as a success. It was truly representative of the Empire. Its deliberations ranged over the whole gamut of Imperial affairs as they were affected by the war. Apart from the conduct of the war itself, the Cabinet dealt with all questions affecting or arising out of it—food-supplies, present and future supplies of raw materials, etc. The grafting of the new Imperial instrumentality upon the British Cabinet had been easy because the War Cabinet of Lloyd George was a small body originally composed of five members. The task would of course have been much more difficult with a British Cabinet of twenty members. But the new instrument was fashioned without pangs and without effort. Its coming stirred not the faintest ripple of criticism; indeed, there was nothing new in it save the use to which it was put. The times were without precedent, but the men called upon to grapple with them had, as in the case of nearly all constitutional developments in the Empire, adapted an old, familiar form to new and revolutionary circumstances.

II

Although we speak of the "Imperial Cabinet" and draw distinctions between the Cabinet and the Conference, allotting to the Conference advisory, and to the Cabinet executive, powers, one must not suppose that the "Imperial Cabinet" had the same executive powers as the British Cabinet, or a Cabinet of any of the self-governing Dominions. We are told by the textbooks on Constitutional Law that the Cabinet is a body "not known to the Constitution." If this were true, it would be a crushing commentary upon the common sense of the Constitution, which these very many years has lived with the Cabinet on terms of almost indecent familiarity without regularising their relations, even to the extent of publicly recognising her. As a matter of fact, the Cabinet is an integral part of the machinery by which what we call responsible parliamentary govern-

ment is carried on throughout the Empire ; and it seems very absurd to pretend that the only part of the machinery in democratic government which has power to do more than talk is "unknown to the Constitution." In any case, whether the Cabinet is known to the Constitution or not, it is known very well indeed to the people. It is the Executive ; it has the power of action—that is to say, it can effect the wishes of the people and take whatever steps are necessary to protect their interests. And the only body that can effectively question its acts is the Parliament composed of the representatives which the people elect at intervals fixed by the Legislature or determined by circumstances. But although the Cabinet is responsible to Parliament, and the Parliament can dismiss it at its pleasure, it cannot usurp its function. When a thing has to be done, it is the Cabinet alone which is able to do it.

Applying these principles to the "Imperial Cabinet," we see that it was literally a "body unknown to the Constitution." Its members were made up of the first and other Ministers of Britain and of the Dominions, of representatives of many Governments. Although they followed the same procedure as ordinary Cabinets, deliberating and registering their decisions, these decisions were not, as is usually so, sufficient authority for whatever action might be necessary to effect them. There remained yet the approval or consent of another Cabinet or of other Cabinets to be obtained. Where, for example, the thing proposed to be done fell wholly within the ambit or power of the British Parliament, the British Cabinet had to authorise the necessary action ; and where these decisions fell within the powers of the Dominions, the same principle applied, although its application was much more difficult. What happened then was this : the decision having been arrived at, the Prime Minister of the Dominion affected and his colleagues assenting, the position was telegraphed to the Acting Prime Minister of the Dominion, who summoned his fellow Ministers, laid the matter before them,

and communicated the result of their deliberations to his Prime Minister. He, in turn, informed the Imperial Cabinet. If the Government of the Dominion—which, it is very necessary to note, always remained in the Dominion—authorised the proposed step, action was taken by virtue of that authority. Always the decision of the Imperial Cabinet, *qua* Imperial Cabinet, was only a recommendation requiring the assent of the Government or Governments which had authority over the subject-matter covered by the decision before it could be translated into action.

The catastrophic upheaval, suddenly transforming a peaceful world into a bloody shambles, had rudely shattered the dreams of those who, bred in lands far remote from the battle-grounds of Europe, had cherished the illusion that war on the grand scale had been banished from the world for ever—or at worst that they, pursuing their peaceful way, studiously refraining from giving offence to other nations, were beyond the reach of its dreadful fury. Though they had pitched their tents at the ends of the earth, they had found themselves in the twinkling of an eye in the very vortex of this fearful storm, compelled to fight for their lives, and to realise that they could not, by ignoring the world, hope to escape the common lot of mankind. Gathered around the council-table of the Empire, they had heard from the Prime Minister of Britain a full and detailed statement of the position as it then stood, and were not only invited, but forced to share the responsibility of guiding and directing the armed forces of the Empire and organising its vast resources for the purpose of this terrible life-and-death struggle on the issue of which the fate of the Empire and of every part of it depended. To this great task they bent all their energies. But although they realised that it was futile to talk of what might have been, that in this struggle there could be no turning back, that at all costs they must press on until victory was achieved, they were firmly resolved that the Dominions must never again be dragged into war without having

had the fullest opportunity of expressing their views before the die was cast. The Conference, therefore, turned to the consideration of the constitutional relations between the Dominions and Britain. The general opinion was that these needed radical amendment.

The delegates expressed a very strong desire for a constitutional conference, and carried a resolution unanimously urging that a special Imperial Conference be called as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities. As we shall have to consider this question in later chapters, it will be sufficient to set out here the text of the resolution, which was as follows :

“The Imperial War Conference is of opinion that the readjustment of the constitutional relations of the component parts of the Empire is too important and intricate a subject to be dealt with during the war, and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference¹ to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities.

“It deems it its duty, however, to place on record its view that any such readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs, should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth and of India as an important portion of the same ; should recognise the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations ; and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary concerted action founded on consultation as the several Governments may determine.”

The reader will perhaps have noted that, although the representatives of India were present at the Imperial Cabinet as well as at the Conference, they were not included as members. The Conference passed a resolution which recommended that the resolution of the 1907

¹ Vide Chapter VII: “Constitutional Conference: Discussion in 1921, Imperial Conference.”

Conference be modified so that India might be fully represented at all future Conferences :

“ That the Imperial War Conference desires to place on record its view that the Resolution of the Imperial Conference of 20th April, 1907, should be modified to permit of India being fully represented at all future Imperial Conferences, and that the necessary steps should be taken to secure the assent of the various Governments in order that the next Imperial Conference may be summoned and constituted accordingly.”

Members of the 1917 Imperial War Cabinet, which had been an experiment, a war measure, expressed the hope before it concluded its labours that it would become a recognised convention of the Constitution. Mr. Lloyd George suggested that there ought to be an annual session of the Cabinet, which would not preclude a special session if urgent questions demanded it. He was not thinking merely of a wartime organisation. The annual meetings of the War Cabinet were to be a permanent instrument of inter-Empire affairs. If the Prime Ministers were unable to attend personally at the annual session, they could appoint as one of their Ministers a deputy¹; but *it was to be clearly understood* that the deputy attended with the same powers as the Prime Minister himself.

The 1917 Cabinet and Conference did good work. The experiment, as it was called, had fully justified itself. The methods and the scope of the War Cabinet's operations were similar to those of an ordinary Cabinet. It was free to develop and to work along any lines its members thought best. Whatever action they considered necessary for the preservation and development of the Empire was open to them; no legal or constitutional restrictions stood in their way. There was, however, no likelihood that they would attempt anything which the people of Britain or the Dominions might regard as action beyond the scope of their authority.

¹ Vide “ Resident Minister ” : Chapter XI : “ Foreign Policy.”

The procedure followed at the Cabinet in 1917 and 1918 was substantially the same. It was the practice for the British Prime Minister to review the situation as it had developed since the close of the previous session. This statement the Foreign Secretary, the Minister for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Colonial Secretary, and other Ministers supplemented, covering the whole ground, so that the visiting Prime Ministers achieved a comprehensive and accurate grasp of the situation as it had been and as it was. This they proceeded to discuss. The Dominion representatives expressed their opinion in turn, approving, commenting upon, criticising, condemning, what had been done. Information upon any point in doubt experts or officials supplied, and the debate became general as divergent views were strongly expressed.

When the general discussion, which frequently lasted over two or three sittings, was concluded, the Cabinet dealt with the more pressing problems of the war as they arose or in the order of their importance. At the beginning of every sitting the Admiralty reported the submarine casualties during the previous twenty-four or forty-eight hours, and the Cabinet received any information which members may have asked for or officials thought essential to the Cabinet's deliberations. And in the same way the Chief of Staff, who very frequently attended in person, supplied very full information of the military position on all fronts. Every day, too, the Dominion representatives, with other members of the War Cabinet, received copies of the more important Foreign Office telegrams from over all the world handled during the previous twenty-four hours. These, with memoranda by Ministers on special questions listed for discussion or explanatory of the policy pursued or proposed by the Minister or by the Government as a whole, ensured that every member of the Cabinet came with his mind fully informed upon the situation. The information given to members of the Cabinet was very full, and covered not only the previous day's move-

ment in the various war zones, but practically every development that affected the civil population—food-supplies, ships sunk, shipbuilding, munitions available, daily output, and so on. Every morning they had before them a return which showed the position on the Western Front; at frequent intervals an indication of the position on the other fronts. They knew how many divisions were available, where each one was located—this applied not only to British and Dominion troops, but to those of our Allies—and what German divisions were in each section and their probable strength. This information was not only full but remarkably accurate, for the British Intelligence Office was wonderfully active and usually most reliable.

Around this table, then, bent in equal consultation, sat British and Dominion statesmen weighing the affairs of Empire. They criticised, suggested, recommended, each contributing to the counsels of the great Commonwealth the voice of their own nation. Truly the Dominions had come far in forty years.

CHAPTER IV

BLACK DAYS AND BLUNDERS

THE 1918-19 War Cabinet is a landmark in the development of Empire government. It began in War and ended in Peace. When it opened on June 11th, 1918, the dark shadow of the German spring offensive hung over it like a pall; when it rose on August 20th, for what was to prove a short recess, the sky was bright with promise, and almost before some of the representatives of the distant Dominions had reached home they were recalled by the glorious news of the Armistice—the gateway through which the war-weary world marched to peace.

The Dominion representatives settled down to work in an atmosphere of enervating depression,¹ and they bent to their tasks in the spirit of men who realised that only action, prompt and wisely conceived, could save the Empire.

No time was wasted on generalities, or in courtly exchanges. The circumstances demanded plain speaking; for weeks they sat many hours daily in conclave, and devoted their nights to poring laboriously over voluminous reports, dispatches, and memoranda in

¹ The Cabinet met on June 11th. All the Dominions except South Africa and India were represented by their Prime Ministers. General Botha unfortunately was not able to attend, and General Smuts represented the Union. The Australian representatives could not reach London on the opening day. The Cabinet was larger than in 1917. The representatives of Britain totalled ten, and of the Dominions and India combined ten, so that, including representatives of the War Office and the Admiralty and other Ministers who attended from time to time and the members of the Secretariat, there were usually present, exclusive of reporters, from twenty to thirty persons.

preparation for the next day's work. For the first and only time in its history one may truly say that the Empire was not governed from Downing Street. The 1918-19 Cabinet not only dealt with a wider range of problems than any other, but, because of the long time it sat, its control of the Empire's policy was more direct. Previous Cabinets and Conferences occupied themselves with laying down general principles, which, because their time was limited, they left to others to apply. And because government is at bottom a very practical business, the difficulty being not so much to secure agreement on general principles as to apply these to ever-changing circumstances—a task that can only rest with those on the spot—the Dominion representatives, scattered over the world, as save for brief and rare intervals they always are, have never been able to exercise any real control of Empire affairs. But in 1918-19 they remained together, with one short respite, on the very centre of the stage of Empire and world-affairs for more than twelve months. The 1918-19 Cabinet not only laid down general principles but applied them; that is to say, instead of tendering advice, the Dominion representatives shared, on terms of perfect equality with Britain, the actual government of the Empire. The present status of the Dominions, their representation at the Peace Conference and in the League of Nations on a footing of equality with all other nations, arise from their efforts.

But the Cabinet was far from Peace and the League as it settled down on June 11th. Whatever flattering dreams of early victory they had cherished since their last visit to England the Dominion representatives flung from them when the Prime Minister described the situation in the war zones. The German spring offensive had culminated in the collapse of the 5th British Army under General Gough and put the greater part of it out of action. That created a situation which seemed likely to become almost desperate, until the extraordinary exertions of the British authorities in rushing reinforce-

ments across the Channel, the British and Dominion troops' heroic resistance to the advance of the victorious German legions, the arrival of the American divisions, and lastly the appointment of Marshal Foch as generalissimo of the Allied forces, had happily averted the debacle. For the time, however, fears that the Allies, compelled to evacuate the Channel ports, would have to tackle an entirely new and dangerous situation in which their armies would be divided, were, to the relief of everybody, dispelled. But the peril had been so imminent, the escape so narrow, the moral and military effects of the enemy's success so penetrating, that every one of the Dominion representatives around that historic table felt his heart-beat falter as he listened to the fateful story and conjured up in his mind the appalling consequences of the disaster so narrowly averted.

As the Prime Minister reviewed the events, military, political, and general, since the Cabinet had adjourned in 1917, and the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary for the Colonies, the First Sea Lord and the C.I.G.S. emphasised with detailed statements the extreme gravity of the situation, our spirits sank still lower. In some ways the position had improved, we were told, but in many others it was much worse. We were relieved to hear that since the last meeting of the Imperial Cabinet in 1917 the Admiralty had mitigated considerably the submarine campaign, which early in the year had reached the stage where it appeared that nothing but a miracle could save Britain from starvation. Had the campaign continued for another three months, or even less, at the same rate, it would have crippled seriously the Allies' power to win the war. Piercing the veil of their studied phrases, we glimpsed the stark fact that it would not merely have crippled but destroyed us. Happily, owing to the success of the measures taken to cope with the menace, the increase in the shipbuilding resources of Britain and the Dominions—which had done splendid work—the position was so far restored that the submarine attack of the enemy had ceased to imperil the Allies.

Then again, since the Cabinet disbanded, the Turkish Army in Mesopotamia had been practically destroyed as a great fighting force. Our armies had captured a very considerable, perhaps the most important, part of Palestine. The strategic value of these victories was very great. Palestine was the great bridgehead of the adjacent countries, and the difficulty of recapturing it would be immense. If the Empire were thrown back upon its own resources and utilised its command of the sea to cut off all supplies from the enemy and from all possible means of expansion north, south, east, and west, Palestine and Mesopotamia would be invaluable. For the situation upon the sea and the eastern war zones we had reason to congratulate ourselves. But the position on the Western Front was admittedly very, very far from encouraging. The unexpected defection of Russia had created an entirely new and dangerous problem, for it liberated one-third of the Austrian and more than one million men of the German military forces—transferred now to the Italian and Western Fronts. When the 1917 Cabinet had adjourned, the hopes for success of the Allied Forces in 1918 depended entirely upon the extent to which Russia could absorb the immense military forces Germany and Austria had detailed for the campaign there. We had built great hopes upon Kerensky's reconstitution of the Russian Army after the abdication of the Emperor, but the Bolshevik revolution on November 9th had completely destroyed these hopes. Not only were the Allies faced by enormously augmented enemy forces, but the Bolsheviks had handed over to the Germans vast stores of material, guns, ammunition. Thus reinforced, their *moral* stiffened with abundant supplies of ammunition and guns, the German armies on the Western Front were equipped magnificently for a great attack in the early spring. They outnumbered the Allied forces, for the American troops had not arrived. When Passchendaele, that long, desperate, and bloody battle, began, there was only one American division in the front line and that division had

only been in the line a fortnight before the "battle" began!

Then there was the tremendous disadvantage which arose from divided command. Despite the lessons of nearly four years of war, the Allies, at the opening of the great spring offensive which culminated in the disaster of March 21st, still operated in sections, with three armies, the French, British, and Italian, each under its own commander. This disunity had nearly proved fatal. In 1917 the Allied forces had outnumbered the Germans by something like three to two, and it was clear from what the Germans had since accomplished that this superiority would have been adequate for very great strategic victories if it had been handled properly. But the Allies could achieve no unity of plan nor of effort. The General commanding the French forces thought the plans of the British General unwise. Whether he was right or wrong is immaterial. One thing was clear, that each suffered from the fact that he took a different view and acted as he thought best. If both armies had moved together probably they would have wrought great results. But when one had acted and the other not, the Germans, knowing the position perfectly well, had concentrated their reserves where the attack was coming, and so frustrated progress and punished the Allies with enormous losses. The Allies disposed their reserves as one might have expected, each army placing them as though it had been acting alone, as though there were two armies instead of one. Each General felt that he must have his reserves where they would serve if he were attacked. This was fatal: if there had been one united reserve of thirty divisions—as there could have been under a united command—the position would have been very different.

It was hardly possible to exaggerate the consequences of this folly—the losses of men and treasure, the fearful risks of disaster. And that the terrific blow of March 21st, which battered the Allies to the edge of collapse, was one fruit of this divided command, nobody could doubt. Reserves which united command would have

concentrated were scattered along the line. The attack was delivered by an army directed by one man upon a plan matured for months, against forces which, until the very eve of the terrible day, had struggled futilely under two commands without any plan. Of course the enemy offensive succeeded. What else could we expect? General Foch, pitchforked into supreme command after the enemy had been smashing at the Allies for a fortnight, when everything and everybody were confused and the reserves flung about according to the ideas of the dual command, did what he could. The casualties—that is to say, the men put out of action—had been very heavy. Ordinarily one would expect 50 per cent. of the casualties to return, but when they fell into the hands of the enemy they were lost for the rest of the war. The number of prisoners taken both from the 5th Army and in the north was very heavy; indeed, the casualties of the Allies in this one battle should have sufficed for four or five months of active warfare. The losses of material, machine guns, and guns of other calibre were very heavy, too, and losses of railways had seriously impaired the strategic position. In short, anything might happen, for Germany was powerful, very powerful, probably more powerful than ever.

Subsequently, military, naval, and air experts amplified these details. How seriously they regarded affairs one may gather from the fact that they suggested that perhaps the time had come to consider what plan should be followed if the enemy took the Channel ports and divided the British and French Armies. No one, however, thought of final defeat. The speakers reminded the Cabinet of what Britain had done in the days of Napoleon, when she alone had continued the conflict, and, using fully her command of the sea, had at last brought him to his knees. Admittedly, however, the present position was big with possibilities; dangerous, depressing possibilities. Everything depended upon the ability of the Allied Armies to prevent the German forces from advancing further during the next three or four months.

This was the critical period. If they could manage to get through August without disaster, the British military advisers thought that the tide would gradually turn in favour of the Allies. America, which had only one division in the line on March 21st, had promised 100 new divisions for 1919. No one suggested another Allied offensive in 1918: their losses were too heavy. The offensive in 1917, of which Passchendaele was the culminating effort, had cost nearly half a million casualties. They must concentrate their efforts to hold up the Germans until the American forces were ready for the field.

Upon this point the facts were most disturbing. America, though she had been in the war since the beginning of April 1917, had, as already pointed out, brought only one division into the front line, at Passchendaele—and that division was in the line only a fortnight before the battle of Passchendaele began. But this was not all. Although America was perhaps the greatest manufacturing country in the world, although the Americans had promised very large quantities of artillery and 50,000 aeroplanes and 1,000 more a month, she had not, up to that moment—June 1918—provided her forces with artillery or aeroplanes. And, as a fact, the Chief of Staff and the General of the Air Force stated that even then America had practically no artillery and not one aeroplane.

The Dominion Ministers listened to all this in stunned silence. They had known that things were not going well, but their fears fell far short of the appalling reality. They were frankly aghast to learn that during the greatest crisis in the history of the Empire such things could happen without their knowledge. The Dominions had sent to the war over one million men, had incurred war debts of nearly one thousand millions sterling; the Dominion Prime Ministers had been, technically, members of the Imperial Cabinet during the last two years of the war; and yet they were profoundly ignorant of all that had passed during their relatively brief absence. They had understood that they were to be kept informed of all

important matters, and, indeed, they had received almost daily cables and voluminous dispatches from the British Government. Yet, as they listened to the statements of Mr. Lloyd George, they realised that they had been entirely in the dark, and had been brought within an ace of disaster through persistence in methods, some of which savoured of tribal warfare, which at best were hopelessly inadequate to the circumstances of the greatest war in history, and upon which they had not been consulted.

Some of the Dominion representatives spoke strongly upon what seemed to them terrible blunders. Hundreds of thousands of the flower of our manhood had been killed—it might be said sacrificed—the Empire exposed to fearful risks, and these risks and this appalling sacrifice had not only failed to bring us nearer to victory, but brought us nearer to defeat. For at that very moment the position of the Allied Forces was most grave. Rightly or wrongly, they felt that somebody was responsible for this, and whoever it was he ought to take the consequences.

For my own part I went no further than to observe, what was indeed only too painfully obvious, that after four years of dreadful slaughter, after fearful losses, we were possibly in a worse position than before the battle of the Marne.

The Dominion Prime Ministers proceeded to discuss the situation. There was some plain speaking, for they felt that the manner in which the campaign was conducted had brought affairs to this almost horrifying pass. Except General Smuts, who had remained in England after the Imperial Cabinet of 1917, none of the overseas representatives had any military experience, and expressly disclaimed any knowledge of military affairs. They fully realised that victory could not be won without great losses, but they felt that the protracted and bloody struggles of 1917 had involved losses quite out of proportion to the very problematical gains. They were now asked to make more sacrifices, to drain more of their manhood into the sink of France and Flanders, to pile up higher that mountain of war debt under which they

now staggered, and though they were prepared to do this if the circumstances demanded it, they knew they would fail in their duty to their people in the great Dominions if they did not say very plainly that the failure of the military operations on the Western Front in 1917 and the collapse of the 5th Army were very largely due to grave defects in the British military organisation.

They drove their criticisms home by most striking examples of inefficiency, which showed that officers holding high command, although the bravest of the brave, and at all times ready to expose themselves to death in endeavours to extricate their men from positions created by their incompetency, had demonstrated that they were quite incapable of adjusting their concepts of war to the conditions on the Western Front. Despite nearly four years' experience of this war, they persisted in the methods of an age that had passed: they had forgotten nothing; they had learned nothing; they seemed, indeed, incapable of learning anything. Speakers quoted the example of British officers who, holding high command, had neglected to protect their entrenchments with barbed wire, declaring that they had won battles before without barbed wire and would do so again. They did not use their machine guns effectively—they had not enough of them; and what they had they distributed so widely that they could not be rapidly moved and concentrated where occasion demanded. Merit was hamstrung. The professional soldiers were more concerned with their careers than with the welfare of the nation; the services of able civilians in the Army were inadequately recognised.

The statement that Germany, with an equal force, had been able to drive us back and inflict greater losses than she had sustained, profoundly impressed the Dominion Prime Ministers, who had always understood that the Allied forces were confronted with superior numbers, that although the Allied losses were heavy, those of the enemy were heavier. But it appeared that the enemy's numbers had been less than we supposed. What, they asked, was to be expected now that our man-power was

so severely reduced and Germany's swollen to superior strength?

Though the Dominions were prepared to find more men and money, they determined not to make useless sacrifice or bolster up inefficient methods and blundering leadership. They did not pretend that they were competent to direct a campaign; they recognised that interference by civil government in military operations was wrong. But they knew, too, that this was more than a war between opposing armies, that it was a life-and-death struggle between nations who had organised their population and their resources for titanic effort; they could not, therefore, be expected to commit themselves to a policy they did not approve, a policy in which they were never consulted. Neither could they leave the control of the fighting forces, the spear-point of the nation, in the hands of incompetent men without imagination or the ability to adapt themselves to changed conditions. In short, they felt that the retention of indifferent commanders in the higher appointments and the failure to use men of ability who had entered the Army during the war were responsible for the disastrous consequences, which now, at the expense of life and money, they must endeavour to rectify.

As obviously some of the British representatives in the Imperial War Cabinet shared these views, it was agreed that a Committee of Prime Ministers should investigate the causes which led up to the disaster of March 21st, and military policy and organisation, with a view to setting out the proper relations between the various Governments of the Empire and those in control of the fighting forces, and of formulating a policy for the conduct of the war.

This Committee, assisted by the Chief of the General Staff, was in effect an inner Imperial War Cabinet, and possessed, or had access to, all the evidence necessary for its duties. It knew, for example, that the Passchendaele offensive, the most useless, bloody, and deplorable battle of the whole war, which swept away the flower of the British Army, left the troops utterly worn out, their

moral seriously impaired, and won nothing; it knew that this desperate, this deplorable adventure was undertaken on the unanimous advice of the Government's military advisers. It knew, too, that the Government followed this advice despite its considerable misgivings and after the military advisers had been asked to consider alternative proposals. The British representatives pointed out to the Committee that if the Government had exercised its powers and rejected the recommendations of their military advisers, the military advisers would have complained that the operations had been stopped at the very point when losses and demoralisation of the enemy were about to yield the full fruits of victory.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom welcomed the frank criticism of his colleagues, and agreed that in the future they ought to share with the British Government, as far as could be arranged, the responsibility for the control of military operations. He proposed that with this object in view the Committee should discuss and agree upon general principles on which the military policy should be based for the months to come. After very full inquiry the Committee drew up a report embodying its conclusions and recommendations. Those bearing upon the points emphasised in the opening discussion of the Cabinet may be quoted: "The Committee considers that the correct principle in regard to appointments in the Army is that every post should be held by the best man available, irrespective of whether he is a professional or civilian soldier.¹ They are averse from continual interference with the Higher Command in the matter of appointments, but they consider that the British Government should insist on the observance of this principle."

¹ In the Dominion Armies this principle governed promotion. General Currie, commanding the Canadian forces, was a civilian; General Monash, commanding the Australian forces, was a civilian. At the time of the Armistice four out of five of the divisional Generals in the A.I.F. were civilians. Towards the latter end of the war practically all the regimental officers were civilians, and about 80 per cent. of these had risen from the ranks.

After considering how far civilian heads of a Government were entitled to exercise control over military policy, and how far this ought to be left to the unfettered discretion of military commanders in the field, the Committee stated that it had been confronted with the same difficulty with which the British Government, and indeed all the Allied Governments, had met with during the war. Without attempting to make a definite statement on the academic aspects of this controversial question, it appeared to the Committee that there were certain incontrovertible principles which should guide the Imperial War Cabinet. The Government was responsible for policy. It was immediately responsible for providing the means whereby the policy should be carried out ; these means included man-power as well as material. At that stage of the war, man-power had become the factor on which victory or defeat might depend. The man-power of the Allies was so far depleted that to withdraw relatively small numbers of men from industry, particularly in Great Britain, was to jeopardise the production of the material means on which the Armies depended. Indeed, scarcely any but those upon whom rested the responsibility of solving it understood how difficult and acute the problem of husbanding our man-power had become. Consequently, it was not only the right but the duty of the Government to assure itself that operations which might involve heavy casualties were not undertaken unless there was a fair chance that they would produce commensurate results on the final issue of the war. This did not mean that the Government should interfere in the conduct of military operations once they were planned, or hamper the Higher Command in minor operations for the rectifying of the line or improving the tactical position ; or that it should hamper the latter from taking advantage of any opportunity which might arise during a battle for an effective counter-stroke ; but it had a right to insist that the general lines of major operations involving possibly a heavy casualty list should be submitted for its

approval. This applied equally to those theatres where the Commander-in-Chief was an Allied officer, as on the Western Front and Salonika, and to those theatres where he was purely a British officer, as in Palestine, Mesopotamia, or Persia.

The Committee found, from the figures supplied by the Minister for National Service, that the estimated number of additional man-power available in 1919 was less than half the number available in 1918, and that even these would be gathered only by combing men out from industries. Apart from a more economical use of troops, the Committee discussed a number of proposals for meeting the situation. One proposal which the War Office had under consideration was the formation of tank divisions. Upon military policy for the future the Committee did not pretend more than to suggest what could only be regarded as a very general guide, partly because the circumstances of war might at any moment change the whole outlook.

The Committee placed on record its appreciation of the immense success of the British Navy. This had been and was the dominating factor of the war; it was the foundation of the whole military framework of the Alliance. Without it there could have been no British or American troops in France. Without it Russia could not have received the munitions and supplies which enabled her to stay in the war as long as she did. Without it Italy could never have dreamt of entering the war. Without it there could have been no Allied force in Salonika, or, indeed, anywhere outside the continental territories of France and Russia. Without it Germany would have been unblockaded and free to send her expeditionary forces to threaten the Allied Armies in the rear, or capture Allied territories overseas. The Alliance could survive the loss of even the greatest armies, as the defection of Russia had shown, and gather fresh strength for a renewed effort. But when the United Kingdom lost the command of the sea, there would end the Alliance and mark the decisive victory of Germany. In

the words of the Prime Minister : " Unless the Allies had been completely triumphant at the outset of the war at sea, no effort on land would have saved them. The British Fleet is mainly responsible for that complete triumph. It could not have been secured and maintained without gigantic efforts in men and material. Any redistribution of our resources which would impair in the least its efforts would be ruinous to the cause of the Allies." On the maintenance of this security the whole cause of the Allies depended, and no risks could on any account be run.

III

The conditions to which the Prime Ministers intended these principles to apply have, happily, passed away, but what has been may be again. These principles are equally applicable now, nor can time rob them of their virtue. Anyhow, it is well that the people of the Empire should know in what way and by what manner of men they were governed in the world-war years 1914-18.

War involves in these times not merely a conflict between professional soldiery, but a desperate struggle between peoples ; and victory visits the nation best organised, whose forces are best armed and equipped and most numerous, and led by the best generals and admirals. And of all the factors that assure victory, wise leadership counts for most. This is of course true of peace not less than of war ; but the penalty paid for poor civil leadership, blundering generalship on the field, too rash or too timid leadership on the sea, is much more severe in war, and may not stop short of irreparable disaster. But all this is so obvious that it ought not to need emphasis. When the people are promptly summoned to the walls of the city to beat off the aggressors who threaten them, they have at least the right to insist that they shall be wisely led. The right man in the right place—meaning, the best man, the man with the best brains, the best equipped by training, or by special ability, this rule

ought to determine leadership in the civil Government, the Army, and the Navy.

But the Dominion Prime Ministers had reason to believe that it had not determined anything in the British Army, at all events not in the higher commands. From what they were told, it appeared that no man, no matter how able he might be, could rise to a higher position than the rank of Brigadier-General unless he was a professional soldier. From this it followed that the armed forces of the Empire, scarcely one-twentieth of which were professional soldiers, were directed not by the best brains of the nation but by the senior officer of the professional army. When we come to look dispassionately at this situation, remembering that the fate of the Empire depended very largely upon whether the high command was composed of men with brains and capacity, men of vision, alert, capable of adjusting themselves to the ever-changing conditions of modern war, or of superbly brave, dull-witted men, steeped in military tradition of an age that was gone, we are appalled to learn that in the greatest war in our history the best brains were scrapped on the altar of military etiquette.

I know all that can be urged for the professional soldier. We must not forget that the Army is his career, and that it is hard for such a man to see himself passed over for some civilian when through many years he has prepared himself for war. But as Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada, aptly put it: "After all, the issue before us makes the career of any man insignificant. What is the career of any man to us? What are the careers of all men put together compared with the present issue? They are absolutely less than dust. If we fail to use the brains of the nation for the best purpose for which they are available, it does not seem that we can have much prospect of winning the war."

As I am not attempting here to write a treatise upon the art and science of government, but only to describe the working of the novel and complex machinery evolved by time and circumstance to serve the Empire during

the war, it will not be expected of me to deal at length with a question which is as old as civilisation itself. Whatever may be in theory the true line of demarcation between the authority of the civil Government and the authority of the generals commanding the armed forces of the nation, in practice it has always caused friction. Wars have been lost through the interference of meddling politicians, and even the greatest generals have been hampered, have seen their plans overridden by men of narrow vision thrown by malicious destiny into the chief seats of civil Government. But we may well doubt, upon reviewing history, whether more harm has not come to States because their civil Governments have lacked moral courage to veto plans of hopelessly mediocre generals, whose minds, unilluminated by the faintest beam of imagination, were incapable of any stroke more novel or effective than the strategy of a bull at a gate.

And here, perhaps, I may appropriately say a word about the plans of, and the relations which appeared to exist between, the civil and military authorities of Britain during the war. When I was in England in 1916, I attended the Cabinet and took part in general discussions on certain phases of the war. But what was there proposed could hardly be called "plans," but rather fell into the category of movements classically demonstrated by the master-stroke of the great Duke of York, who, having marched his troops up the hill, forthwith marched them down again.¹

¹ Salonika. Lord Kitchener, and his Chief of Staff, Sir William Robertson, proposed to the Cabinet that the four(?) British divisions at Salonika should be transferred to the Western Front. Mr. Asquith, as usual, had nothing much to say. Neither had anyone else. But I ventured to inquire why the troops were sent out in the first place. Diligent cross-examination revealed that the divisions were sent to co-operate with the French, and now it seemed that they were to be removed to strengthen the Western Front. The reasons given for removing them were, I thought, entirely unconvincing. In the end the Cabinet agreed to transfer two and allow two to remain. Two or three days after General Joffre came over, and with M. Cambon conferred with the British Government. He hammered the table and, mistaking the simple, sincere folly of the authorities for something more intentional, exclaimed that England must

Up to 1918 the Australian Government was never consulted about any plan; it was sometimes, though rarely, notified that this or that project was contemplated; usually it was told that a thing had been done or was on the point of being done. I am not here complaining of this reticence. In war one does not shout one's intentions from the house-tops. To deprive an expedition of its element of surprise is to rob it of its best chance of success, and even the most secret messages have a way of leaking out. But there was another reason why the British Government did not consult the Dominions about their plans. They could not do so for the simple but sufficient reason that, except in a very few instances, they had no plans, or perhaps I should say they had no carefully prepared and matured plans in which they persisted. The position on the Western Front was fixed, and the initiative lay with the enemy—at all events, it was evident he was in great force, and somehow or other had to be stopped. And it was quite clear that this involved the disposition of sufficiently numerous and adequately armed troops supported by powerful artillery and whatever other devices science and invention had placed at the disposal of the Allies. The plan of campaign on the Western Front was in broad outline determined by the enemy's presence and movements.

I do not suggest for a moment that the Allied generals were without all initiative; but it is clear that they were compelled to maintain sufficient forces along a very long line, and, to that extent, could not utilise these elsewhere. I speak of course as one entirely unfamiliar with the art and science of war. There may be, for all I know, some sovereign virtue that eludes the untrained eye in those furious blind frontal attacks by masses of troops which crushed the Empire with a dispiriting spectacle of great,

be deserting France. This, of course, settled the business offhand, and the four divisions were allowed to remain. Obviously something was wrong somewhere. If it was good to have them there, no one should have thought of removing them. If it was desirable to remove them, the Government should not have vetoed its decision.

heroic, but futile sacrifices. But it can hardly be contended that the operations on the Western Front, sustained by stupendous and splendid effort and marked by fearful losses, were "plans." Anyway, leaving the High Command aside, I could never learn that the British Government had any plan of campaign on the Western Front; nor, indeed, on any other. And there was not, so far as I was able to gather, any definite, coherent plan of campaign which, covering all the war zones for which preparations were made, the Armies should follow until the objective was won. I do not say for one moment that individual Ministers had not carefully surveyed with a far-seeing eye the vast area of war, and after much thought had evolved plans to fit in with the circumstances in this or that zone, or perhaps in all; but there was no co-operation between the members of the Government and between the heads of the military, air, and naval forces. One swore by this plan, the other by that; there was no co-operation. There were plans, but there was no plan to which all were committed, and to advance which all laboured diligently.

Take the Gallipoli campaign, that glorious failure. Could it be said that this was the result of a deliberate and well-matured plan which, once committed to it, the British Government supported with all the forces at its disposal? Had there been a plan to which all were committed, to which all lent their support, it probably would have succeeded. But it is clear that the Government just drifted, now drawn towards the vortex, now carried into some stagnant backwater. Whether Mr. Churchill was the first to conceive the idea or not, there is no doubt that he made it his own, and did all that one man could to give it shape and substance. But it failed. In some quarters the project had been scathingly condemned because it failed; but what else could we expect? There was a reasonable probability that if the Government had taken up the project when Mr. Churchill first suggested it and had promptly launched it and adequately supported it with the naval and military forces, then

available, the troops would have burst through to a success that would have changed the military situation so as to shorten the war by years.

The Gallipoli campaign failed because the civil Government had no definite plans of carrying on the war; because there was no leadership; because each department was largely a law unto itself; because between the military and naval chiefs there was no co-ordination. I do not suggest that the Dardanelles project was the only plan by which we could have struck mortally at the Achilles heel of the enemy Powers, but it was one way; and we are neither called upon to praise, condemn, nor even criticise it. For out of the mist of blunders, of wasted opportunities, of inexcusable procrastination which marked the fumbling attempts to carry it out, one fact emerges with startling clarity: the Government, the military and naval chiefs, all thought it not only feasible but risked hundreds of thousands of lives to push the attack home. It is true, of course, that they did not—as Mr. Churchill, I think, proves pretty conclusively¹—all support the same plan at the same time. It is unhappily true that when one blew hot, the other blew cold. But at one time or another all—War Government, War Office, and Admiralty—thought it a good plan and made it their own. They thought it so good, indeed, as to detail 250,000 troops for the enterprise, of which 120,000 actually took part in the battle of Suvla Bay. They thought it so good that not once, but several times, the Admiral in command, or the Admiralty, was prepared to risk a very substantial fleet in a single-handed attempt to force the Narrows. They thought it was good—that it was very good. It did not succeed, so it has been condemned. But on a fair review of the facts as far as they are known, there was reasonable probability that it would have succeeded if it had been pushed home at the right time and in the right way.

¹ *The World Crisis*, by Winston S. Churchill. Also a recent review of the Gallipoli campaign by a German, General Kannengiesser, which is even more emphatic.

Who is to blame for its miscarriage? Certainly not the man who conceived it. The civil Government was to blame; the War Office and the Admiralty were each in their turn responsible for the delay to strike at the right time, in the proper way.

Applying the general principle laid down by the Committee of Prime Ministers to this particular misadventure, what are we to say? Ought the civil Government to have insisted upon prompt action? Ought it to have compelled the War Office and the Admiralty to work together? Probably, and possibly it would have tried to do so if members could have agreed upon a plan amongst themselves; but, even so, with men like Lord Kitchener and Lord Fisher, this was a counsel of perfection. At that moment Lord Kitchener enjoyed an immense popularity; he was a picturesque and commanding figure, who occupied the very centre of the stage. He was irreplaceable. Who but he could have inspired the civil population with such patriotic fever and confidence? It was his personal appeal to the people of England that crowded recruiting offices. He kneaded the untrained civilian mass into the disciplined armies which, alas! died so gloriously for England. Suppose he had threatened to resign if he were not allowed to do his job in his own way and in his own time. And then there was Lord Fisher, a wonderful man. His name was one to conjure with amongst the multitude. But most emphatically he was not a man easy to get on with unless he had all his own way. Suppose one or both of these had threatened to resign. What Government would have dared to persist in its design? Certainly not the one led by Mr. Asquith, which was disunited, trembling shakily before the disfavour of the people. And as we have seen, even Mr. Lloyd George, whose position was much more secure, dared not veto the Passchendaele offensive, although he was convinced that it must fail and cost fearful loss of life. Ought he to have interfered? The fact is that in time of war the people look to their military and naval leaders rather than

to the civil Government. The people demand that the generals and admirals shall have a free hand until they fail—and then they clamour for their heads upon a charger.

How the leadership of second- and third-rate men affected the Dominions can be really understood. Britain had the remedy in her own hands. She was responsible for the appointments, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say for the system under which they were made. What Britain had done, Britain alone could undo.

The Dominions could only place their armed forces at the disposal of the leaders Britain chose to appoint. And as I have shown, the Dominion Governments were not in a position to judge the ability of the British High Command. Until June 1918 they knew little or nothing, for the official telegrams gave no hint of what went on behind the scenes. There was nothing which would lead them to believe, for example, that the Gallipoli campaign was foredoomed to failure, through belated action, divided counsels, and ineptitude. The Australian Government was informed, but it was not consulted, when its soldiers were sent to Gallipoli, nor when they were taken away. If the authorities had fully explained the situation to the Australian Government in January or February, there would have been little or no difficulty in making available troops—along with those of New Zealand—in sufficient numbers to have given the enterprise a reasonable chance of success. People seem generally to admit now that two divisions in February or early March, with a naval attack in force, could have mastered the peninsula. At all events, that was the time to make the attempt, and there was no reason why it should not have been made. But no one thought it worth while to consult the Dominions concerned.

Again, when it was decided to evacuate the peninsula, the British Government communicated with the Australian Government and asked if it wished to make any comments. No doubt there were many comments that

I could have made, that I felt strongly moved to make, but they were hardly suitable for telegraphic transmission. So we were silent, and for six weeks I went about with the appalling postscript, "Prepare for 49 per cent. casualties" burnt into my very soul. But even if we had known then all that we learned afterwards, what could we have done? We could have protested. Yes, but is there anything more pathetically futile than protests from those who have no practicable alternative but submission? Our armed forces had to be placed at the disposal of Britain; that was the only possible way to use the men. Unity was essential to victory, and the British Government alone was responsible for seeing that the very best brains in the Empire were used.

CHAPTER V

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

THE War Cabinet was daily immersed in great affairs. Every hour was big with some new and distressing complications. The vastness no less than the fury of this titanic conflict was at every moment impressed upon our minds. It was indeed a world-war; sometimes it seemed almost a war of worlds. From every point the news poured in upon us. From Afghanistan to Albania, from Arabia back to the Balkans, from Mesopotamia to Palestine, from the Isonzo and the Piave, to Villers-Bretonneux and the far-flung Western Front stretching out on every side of this gateway to Paris, swiftly passed the shuttle through the threads of this monstrous loom, bringing telegrams, dispatches, couriers with tidings, disturbing, depressing, and more rarely faintly tinged with hope.

The Dominion Prime Ministers, but lately complaining that they had been kept in the dark, were dazzled by the fierce glare that now beat upon them. But yesterday they had known nothing; now, alas! they knew everything, and their last state was worse than the first. For indeed, as the immense panorama was unrolled with disjointed and bewildering jerks, they saw little promise of victory. But still they hoped, they prayed, and diligently laboured to ensure and hasten its coming.

Months had passed since the Germans' devastating rush in the spring, but England shivered still in the shadow of that disaster. And now, so we were informed, another great offensive was impending. Huge numbers of troops were being massed, but no one could be sure where they would attack. In these circumstances the

attacking party had a great advantage. He could compel the Allies to hold the whole line in strength, and by a feint, perhaps, divert their resources so that they could not be available at the point where he made the real assault. The Prime Ministers learned that the enemy was very strong, and when they remembered what had happened in March they felt more than a little perturbed. But I do not think that in even the darkest hour they doubted that victory would come to the Allies at last. I do not think anyone in England doubted it, really. To doubt would have been unbearable after all the sacrifice, waste, and effort.

The weeks passed, and though the suspense became no less, the sky seemed to clear a little. The great offensive that had threatened so long spent itself without much damage. The *moral* of the Allied Armies was good. Events seemed to justify a little optimism. Then the end began.

On July 4th was fought the battle of Hamel, which was, in essentials, a great battle on a small scale. The Australian forces, commanded by General Sir John Monash, achieved a decisive victory and captured large numbers of prisoners and material. Hamel, although no one then perceived its significance, was to prove the beginning of the end. This was the first distinct success since the disaster of March 21st. Hitherto the Allies had thought themselves fortunate when by desperate efforts they held the German legions. Around Amiens the struggle between the enemy, flushed with success, and the Allies savagely stamped into the earth scars that will long record there man's astounding capacity for suffering. The Allies had arrested the German advance, but to do more seemed impossible.

The battle of Hamel changed all this; the Australian forces—with a small detachment of Americans to whom the omens presaged by the glorious fourth of July had proved irresistibly auspicious, although General Pershing had vetoed any co-operation by American soldiers—had found that the enemy could be forced back. The moral

effect of this upon the Allied Armies was enormous, and it certainly seems to have been responsible for the plan of campaign which began on August 8th, completely reversed the positions on the Western Front, and more than any other single factor convinced the German leaders that all hope of military victory had passed away. Ludendorff said that it was "Germany's black day," and the German people, fired transiently by the triumphs of the spring, fell back into a despair which no threats or promises could alleviate.

But all this was very much in the future. The military leaders, British or French, had no idea that the end was near. Indeed, they were absolutely convinced that the decisive stages of the war would not be reached before 1919 or 1920. The C.I.G.S. advised the Imperial Cabinet that he gravely doubted whether it would be wise to attempt to force a decision before 1920.

It says a great deal for Britain's strength of character and her calm confidence in the Allies that through the very darkest days of 1918 the Imperial Cabinet turned, whenever the exigencies of war permitted, to consider the great problems peace would bring. One of the greatest of these was the Peace itself—the terms and conditions which the Allies could and ought to accept. The Cabinet had no idea that the end was so near; indeed, as I have pointed out, it was at other moments absorbed in plans for the 1919 and 1920 campaigns. But the majority of its members believed that, although the way might be long and dark, final victory for the Allies was assured. And though the war still raged with horrid fury, tentative peace proposals had been more or less vaguely outlined in the Reichstag. The motives behind these were fairly obvious. Those splendid dreams of world-empire which in the earlier years of the war had filled the minds of the Germanic peoples were becoming more and more sicklied o'er with the dark and brooding shape of downfall. The Empire wanted peace, longed and prayed for peace, but not a peace dictated by the enemy or one that would pass, but a just peace and one that should endure.

People generally agreed that we had reached a point in the war when it became necessary to define more precisely what was the relative importance to the British Empire of the objects for which it was fighting and what was the irreducible minimum that must be secured at all costs before the Empire could consent to any peace.¹

Members had before them a report of the Committee appointed by the War Cabinet in 1917, and a most valuable paper written by Mr. Amery at about the same time. The situation had changed since these were prepared; the submarine campaign, then moving rapidly towards its greatest intensity and threatening Britain with starvation, was now effectively checked. But when they were written, Passchendaele and March 21st were to come. And not even the most fantastic optimist in the Cabinet could at that moment see in what way the situation had improved. A year had passed; dangers that threatened had largely been overcome; but in their place had sprung up others not less menacing. The end seemed far off!

And Victory, when would that revisit a world so weary of blood and hate? Defeat the authorities never contemplated for a moment, but at times some despaired of decisive victory. They spoke of preparing for a "limited military success." But this was not a general opinion, and recognising fully the strength of the great enemy, but confident that in the end the Allies would prevail, the 1918 Cabinet set itself to draw up peace terms—that is to say, terms upon which the Empire must insist before agreeing to peace. It was necessary to consider these because the British Government might be confronted at any moment with suggestions for discussion or even with definite peace proposals. Upon these they would have to make up their minds at short notice. It was not likely that there would be any opportunity for consulting the Dominions and India comparable to that afforded by the Imperial War Cabinet then assembled. It was essential, therefore, that before the

¹ President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points made it necessary to define the attitude of the Empire towards peace.

Cabinet dispersed it should carefully consider what were the minimum conditions to which they could agree, and to lay down a policy for the guidance of the British Government, both during the war and at the Peace Conference.

First, the Cabinet decided that the fundamental principle by which the representatives of Empire must be guided was "security." The Empire fought not to gain territory or to extend its power, but to defend itself from the aggression of those whose watchword was not "security," but "power." The British Empire had nothing to gain from this war, but had very much to lose—how much, became very clear to the Dominion representatives as the great canvas of Empire unrolled before them. They realised then, better than they had ever realised before, that the Dominions were partners in a world Commonwealth of Nations, and the watchword and guiding principle of this mighty institution was security—security not only for those nations gathered under the banner of Empire, but security for all the peoples of the world. This was not only a great ideal; it was a living principle, in defence of which millions had already died—it was a principle so completely attuned to the outlook, desires, and circumstances of the Dominions that they did not hesitate to support whatever measures were essential to its maintenance. They realised quite well what this involved. The Empire, the civilised world, could never hope to enjoy security under a victorious Germany. Belgium could not regain her freedom and independence, France be freed from the nightmare of German domination, while the military power of Germany remained unbroken. To talk of security in Europe until the German legions were driven from France and Belgium was idle. Then there was the East, where German arms and German intrigue had gravely imperilled British interests, and the future peace of the world; and Africa, where German ambition had endeavoured to found an Empire by calculated savagery and bloodshed; and the Pacific, from which Germany must be driven out, if Australia and New

Zealand were to remain free nations. For where Germany was, neither freedom nor security could be.

The representatives of the different nations and parts composing the Empire, standing as they did for nearly 500,000,000 of people, were, however, not in a position to formulate peace terms or lay down principles which should guide the representatives of the Empire in any peace negotiations without considering their obligations to their Allies. These obligations Britain had incurred during the war; they arose out of the circumstances of the war, and must inevitably condition the terms of peace that ended it. First, they were bound by the Pact of London, September 5th, 1914, whereby Britain undertook not to make peace separately, not to formulate peace terms without the consent of the other signatory Powers. It followed, therefore, that any peace terms they might agree upon must be submitted to their Allies. They were bound, too, by treaties, agreements, or undertakings of various kinds to practically all the Allied Powers and to certain neutral countries. It was, then, clear that the British Empire not only could make no peace without the consent of her Allies, but that the terms of peace to which she could assent must be conditioned by the obligations which she had incurred. Some of these went far, and the Dominion representatives heard a good many of them for the first time. After long but entirely harmonious discussion, the Cabinet agreed upon the terms of peace, including the disposition of the former German colonies,¹ which the representatives of the Empire would support, and laid down general guiding principles.

II

The Cabinet turned next to consider what ought to be

¹ In respect of German New Guinea, Samoa, and South-west Africa, the Cabinet decided definitely that these must be ceded to the Dominions—Australia taking over New Guinea; New Zealand, Samoa; and the Union of South Africa, South-west Africa. The Cabinet was of the opinion that the mandatory principle was not applicable to these territories.

the Empire's attitude towards the suggested League of Nations, which, everyone hoped, would prevent war for ever. Sir Eyre Crowe and Lord Robert Cecil had prepared very valuable papers, and the Cabinet had before it also the report of the Phillimore Committee, which the British Government had appointed "to inquire into the question, particularly from a juridical and historical point of view," into the various schemes "for establishing by means of a League of Nations or other device some alternative towards a means of settling intended disputes, and to report on their practicability, to suggest amendments, or to elaborate a further scheme if on consideration it should be deemed possible and expedient, and to report thereon."

The Committee had carefully and exhaustively inquired into the various proposals formulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well as into those put forward since the recent revival of the movement, and submitted a draft convention which, it considered, avoided the most obvious defects in the schemes it had examined. This the Committee believed had the advantage of being practicable and a reasonable chance of being accepted.

The Cabinet carefully considered the report of the Committee and the draft Convention, and discussed what ought to be the attitude of the Empire towards a League of Nations, and, assuming that the principle of the League was accepted, what ought to be its scope and powers. The debate was prolonged and, as it proceeded, revealed wide differences of opinion. While all found the ideal of a League of Nations to enforce peace attractive, and some spoke as though a League of Nations formed for this purpose would mean the end not only of war but of force, and the coming of the day when Right, and Right alone, would be the standard by which nations would settle their quarrels, others, not less earnest in their desire for peace, contended that the matter was not quite so simple as it might seem. Mere adherence to

the principle, mere membership of the League, would not change the nature of man.

The idea of a League of Nations was in itself good, but whether it was to be something more than a name depended upon the details. What sort of League was it to be? What limits, if any, would be set to its authority? And in what circumstances would it exercise that authority? Would it possess authority to settle all disputes, or only those of a certain kind? And, lastly, how was it going to enforce its decisions? It was evident to all but those who went about with their heads in the clouds that unless the League had adequate force at its disposal to compel obedience to its decisions, it would be nothing more than a lath painted to look like iron. And if it had this force, which must be adequate—that is to say, a force which against that of any single Power would be overwhelmingly superior—who would direct and control it? At whose word would it be hurled against this or that nation? Whether recalcitrant nations were to be starved into surrender or smitten with a sword overwhelmingly, force must be available to the League. An effective League of Nations could only rest upon Force. Who was to supply it? Would every nation furnish its quota, which it would equip and maintain, but not control?

Wars arise mainly from economic causes; a League of Nations that could interfere in disputes arising out of such causes, no matter what pretext it might put forward, was not likely to be of much use. And if a League could interfere in these matters, what became of the sovereign rights of the State? If the League could say what tariff a nation should impose, or who should be allowed to enter its territories, there remained little to the State.

The Cabinet considered the Phillimore Convention, but there was no time for a detailed discussion of the articles. The attitude of the Cabinet, broadly stated, entirely favoured the principle of a League of Nations, but its members generally hesitated to commit them-

selves definitely upon any detailed scheme. On certain fundamental points there was a consensus of opinion. Members unanimously opposed a supernational authority. They would not support a League which impaired the sovereignty of States, or in any way trespassed upon the national authority in the sphere of domestic policy. Here for the moment we may leave the question: we shall have to deal with the League of Nations at a greater length when we come to the post-armistice Cabinets and review the work of the British Delegation at the Peace Conference, and, later still, when we consider how far the present status of the various parts of the British Empire in the League is compatible with the unity upon which the Empire depends.

III

The Cabinet, sitting regularly for over two months, had done good work. The Dominion representatives were fully informed of the position in all the war zones, and they had expressed their views freely on the strategy that led up to and was responsible for Passchendaele and March 21st. They had done what they were able to suggest a policy more suited to the Western Front and to the circumstances of the Empire. They had reviewed the past, examined the present, and as far as possible explored the possibilities of the future. They had formulated the "war aims," or rather the "war aspirations," of the Empire, in Europe and outside it. They had agreed upon the minimum peace terms which they thought should be accepted if proposals were made to the British Government after the overseas representatives had dispersed to their homes. Their attitude on the proposal for the League of Nations to prevent future wars had been, if not made quite clear, at least outlined. And upon that specious pretender "Freedom of the Seas" they had turned a cold and inflexible back. But these labours were not all, for besides the work of the Cabinet there had been very frequent, indeed almost

continuous, sittings of the Imperial Conference, which had discussed and decided upon matters of great importance. Among these may be mentioned food supplies, Imperial meat supplies, raw material, petroleum, minerals and metals, migration, communications, and demobilisation. Some of the Dominion representatives were anxious now to return home, and they understood that toward the end of August the Imperial Cabinet would disperse, leaving to the British Government the great work of conducting the war.

Events were moving rapidly. On July 18th the Germans had launched their offensive against the French front, but although they gained a little ground, the attack failed in its objective; and General Mangin, counter-attacking with great vigour, had retaken the lost ground and forced the enemy back on a fairly wide front. The sky was clearing, the *moral* of the Allied armies was strong. But the High Command had no idea that military victory lay near at hand. The Cabinet, for example, learned that General Plumer, who had been doing splendid work, proposed to continue his successful tactics of nibbling continually or tapping at the enemy's front throughout the winter. And the work of preparing plans for the 1919 and 1920 campaigns was pushed rapidly forward.

And then, like a glorious morning, burst over the Empire news of the August 8th offensive. The tidings from the front seemed too good to be true. The Allies not only had driven the enemy back, but they had him on the run. At the first men hardly dared to hope that the success of the first day could continue. There was much disturbing talk about a German counter-attack, which would force our men back. But as day followed day and brought its tale of victory upon victory, even the most cautious admitted that if the tide had not turned, the flood-waters were definitely checked.

After the sitting of August 20th, the representatives of Canada and New Zealand having arranged for their return, the Imperial War Cabinet decided to adjourn

until 1919. The Australian representatives, profoundly impressed—naturally¹—by the possibilities of the Allied offensive, decided to remain, for some weeks at any rate, so as to be at hand if, happily, things should turn out as they hoped. When the Cabinet dispersed, I went over to France with my colleague² and, following along the line the Australian troops had taken in the great offensive, endeavoured to learn at first hand what were the prospects of an early termination of the war.

From Amiens, which I had visited in 1916 and again earlier in 1918, finding it on each occasion deserted by civilians, under the enemy's fierce bombardment, and almost completely shattered by shell fire, we proceeded through Villers-Bretonneux to Péronne, where we arrived on the morning of the day after the Australians captured it.

From what I had seen and heard, I felt certain that the end was near, and this conviction was strengthened by an interview with M. Clemenceau, in which I had the opportunity of hearing the views of Marshal Foch, who, in reply to the Prime Minister of France, said that he was certain of a military victory before Christmas, probably in less than six weeks. On my return to London, however, I found leading men strongly of the opinion that the war would not finish that year. Lord Northcliffe informed me that *The Times* representative in Berlin reported Germany to be far from exhausted, and had given it as his settled belief that although we were driving the Germans back, they had strategic reasons for retreat, and that they would most certainly make a stand along a line decided upon by the German High Command. Some at least of the British Ministers shared this view, and everything proceeded upon the assumption that the war would go on until the next year at least.

¹ The offensive of August 8th was mainly carried out by Dominion troops. Four divisions of Canadians, five of Australians—for the first time acting together—one British, one French, and one regiment of Americans were engaged.

² Sir Joseph Cook, afterwards High Commissioner for Australia.

In view of what I had seen and heard and of the very definite assurance of the great French soldier, I could only suppose that the war had lasted so long that it had become, as it were, an integral part of the national life. Everything was adjusted to its dreadful ends. The whole nation was organised for war, its economic life had turned into the swirling, turgid stream. The spirit of the people was keyed up to the excruciating pitch of war emotion; everything moved swiftly, desperately; there was a hard, nervous light in the people's eyes; their nerves were strained to the verge of hysteria; they had almost forgotten the old leisurely life of pre-war days, and in a way they scarcely regretted it.

They had not wanted war; indeed, all except a few had believed that war on the grand scale was impossible. When it came, they were dumbfounded. The earth seemed to shudder and fall away beneath their feet. But having adjusted themselves to the new and appalling order of things, they had set their teeth and, putting all other things aside, had resolved to see the business through to whatever bitter end it might bring them. They would make those responsible for this awful crime against civilisation bitterly regret their action.

At first, the wheels of the national machinery had creaked badly, but generally the Government had evolved a complete and wonderful organisation. Britain stripped for war was an inspiring spectacle. But some were so intent upon their new task of perfecting the machinery for winning the war that they seemed to have lost sight of the war itself. As they had believed in 1914 that war could not be, so in 1918 they acted as if the war would never end. In fact, when they woke up one morning and found that it was all over bar subscribing the national debt and rebuilding the economic structure of the country that lay shattered on the pavements at their feet, some of them viewed this abrupt termination of their labours almost as a personal affront.

The Armistice found Britain almost as unprepared for

peace as she had been for war. The economic life of the nation had been switched over from peace to war so completely that the abrupt termination of hostilities left those who directed things dazed and, seemingly, incapable of turning to the Herculean but prosaic task of peace from the work of raising, training, equipping, and feeding armies and the civilian population, and pouring out in ever-increasing quantity and in ever-extending variety the impediments of mechanical war. They had been struggling desperately in the storm-tossed ocean for so long that when they found themselves panting but safe on shore again they continued to kick and fight and gasp, like men swimming for their lives.

IV

For years we had been stumbling about in the darkness that had begun to strike even into our hearts, covering there the bright, steadfast eyes of our faith in the earth's ability to be more than a bedlam of hatred and despair. Sometimes we told ourselves that we could see pale fingers in the sky, promises of relief from this night of disaster, but we always found that our imagination was harnessed to our wishes. Now civilisation, among which Man had walked with a certain dignity, a certain humanity, stood out vaguely in the twilight. They were a little damaged, to be sure, a little stained, a little insecure, but they stood. We felt in that first gush of relief that though repairs would be extensive, in the light we could face and do anything. We plunged into the task of rehabilitating our ravished civilisation.

It was August 8th which finally turned our thoughts from plans for 1919 and 1920 and set us rushing up and down in anxious anticipation of Germany's acknowledgment that the colossal dragon of her ambitions was strangled. Then came Allenby's victory over the Turks—one of the most brilliant and decisive battles in history—and the collapse of Bulgaria. When Bulgaria surrendered on October 1st, the Prime Minister summoned

the Imperial War Cabinet again,¹ and we considered the situation as the British Ambassador in Paris had set it out in a telegram. The Armistice with Bulgaria was, in effect, a military convention, for which the French Commander-in-Chief in Salonika alone was responsible. The Ambassador pointed out that while upon peace terms the Allies were to act equally, in a military convention the General Officer Commanding must be able to move promptly. The line between a military and a political situation could be defined as the difference between the conditions of an armistice and the terms of peace. Although it was true that the terms of an armistice might effect the basis of peace, the Commander had done nothing which would decide the future of Bulgaria.

The point which arose out of this Bulgarian situation illustrates the wide range of the Imperial War Cabinet's authority and the Dominions' direct control with Britain of world-affairs. The United States Minister in Sofia had sent a telegram to General D'Esperey demanding the mediation of President Wilson. The Cabinet discussed this telegram, which had been submitted to M. Clemenceau, and his reply instructing the General to have no relations with the Minister for the United States and informing him that the French Government had telegraphed to Washington protesting against any intervention. We saw that here was a very delicate situation in which we must tread carefully to avoid administering a rebuff to President Wilson on the one hand and offending M. Clemenceau on the other. Later we learned that M. Clemenceau had taken charge of the military situation in Bulgaria, and as this might prejudice the terms of peace, and, anyway, was a matter for joint action, we decided that the Allied Governments must be consulted before military operations were extended. We decided, too, that the Supreme War Council should meet in Paris,

¹ The representatives of Australia, South Africa, and Newfoundland, who were the only Dominion representatives in England, attended the Cabinet.

as soon as possible, to discuss the military and political situation.

The second incident arose out of General D'Esperey's action in breaking up the British forces in Salonika, which had formed the right wing of the Allied Forces there for years, and grouping them so that they lost their individuality and became forces acting under French instead of British generals. The Cabinet telegraphed to M. Clemenceau and instructed the British Empire representatives on the Supreme War Council to take whatever action the situation demanded.

From October 5th to 9th British, French, and Italian representatives met in Paris in five conferences, and the British representatives considered man-power with Marshal Foch. On October 10th Mr. Lloyd George told the Imperial War Cabinet what the Supreme War Council had done, how it had decided upon the conditions of an armistice with Bulgaria and an armistice with Turkey, and, having learned that the Central Powers had applied to President Wilson for an armistice with a view to peace negotiations, had invited the military representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers, then at Versailles, with whom were joined representatives of the American, British, French, and Italian Navies, to consider conditions of an armistice with Germany and Austria on the basis of certain principles the Council had decided. And this was being done. The Cabinet considered the terms for the armistice with Turkey, a note by Marshal Foch on the terms of an armistice with Germany, and a joint resolution by the Allied naval and military commanders upon the terms of an armistice with Germany and Austria.

When he summarised for the Cabinet on November 5th what the Supreme War Council had done since our last meeting on October 20th,¹ Mr. Lloyd George revealed that events continued to set in the Allies' favour, and that, although hostilities continued, Germany

¹ All members of the Cabinet had received regularly and promptly the *procès-verbaux* of the Council's proceedings.

fought with none of her old fire. Everybody was working feverishly to prepare for the collapse. We discussed the claims and obligations to Japan, on which a paper was circulated, and the future of the islands in the Pacific, particularly the Marshall and Caroline groups, and I made very clear the attitude of Australia. We considered also the terms of the armistice with Germany, which the Supreme War Council thought sufficiently stern, doubting, indeed, if she would accept them. Marshal Foch shared those doubts, but promised to overpower the enemy before Christmas. I pressed very strongly upon the Cabinet my views that if the Fourteen Points formed the basis of the armistice they would fix the terms of peace, and that if this was so we would be committed to the Fourteen Points as President Wilson interpreted them. Against this I protested vigorously, but I was given to understand that nothing would be done until the Cabinet had considered it. On November 3rd and 4th, however, the representatives of the Allied Powers agreed in Paris to the terms of the armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points, excluding, however, the point upon the "Freedom of the Seas" and modifying the point upon "Indemnities."

At the Cabinet of November 20th Lloyd George told us that he had informed the American representatives that the British Government considered that none of the German colonies should be restored and that those captured by Dominion troops should be held by the Dominions which had captured them. The Americans had maintained a non-committal attitude.

In considering a proposal that a preliminary Allied Conference should be held before the Peace Conference proper, the Cabinet agreed that, without prejudice to discussion afterwards, each of the self-governing Dominions should have the fullest opportunity to speak on those questions which directly concerned them. The Government did not contemplate at this moment the direct, full, and equal representation at the Peace Conference which the Dominions later achieved.

Incidentally it was at this Cabinet that we discussed what attitude the Allies should adopt towards the ex-Kaiser and his son. Some held very strongly that he ought to be indicted for murder, but before what court the case could be heard they did not make clear. The Law Officers of the Crown were invited to examine from the widest point the question of advancing criminal charges against Germany's now intensely discomfited rulers. After hearing the Attorney-General (Sir Frederick Smith, now Lord Birkenhead) upon this, the Cabinet of November 28th decided that, so far as the British Government had power, the ex-Kaiser should be held personally responsible for his crime against international law.

The Cabinet was covering an enormous range of work. On this particular day—November 20th—for example, we turned from a discussion upon means of revictualling Allied, enemy, and neutral countries to consider what should be done with John Maclean, a candidate for Parliament, then imprisoned for an offence against the Defence of the Realm Act. The workers on the Clyde had threatened to take very drastic steps if he were not released, and there were to be big meetings at the Albert Hall on the following Saturday and Sunday. When the Dominion representatives had declared themselves favourable to his release, the Cabinet decided to notify the Home Secretary that the majority had so agreed.

On December 3rd the Allied Conference¹ (or, as it was called, Conversation) was held in the Cabinet Room, No. 10 Downing Street. M. Clemenceau, Marshal Foch, and General Weygand represented France; Signor Orlando, Baron Sonnino, Count Aldrovani, and Captain Jones, Italy; and the whole of the Imperial War Cabinet, including all the Dominion representatives (except General Botha), the British Empire. Altogether thirty-five persons, including the Secretariat and the

¹ A meeting of the representatives of Britain, France, and Italy had been held on the previous day, but overseas Dominion representatives did not attend.

interpreter, Professor Mantoux, were present. Mr. Lloyd George presided.

We considered many urgently important matters, and the representatives of the Dominions spoke freely in the discussions. When the decision, made previously, upon the representation of small nations at the Peace Conference came up for review, I asked what share in the work the Dominions and India would have. The paragraph governing this seemed somewhat vague, and I requested an authoritative interpretation. After a short debate the Conference agreed that upon all matters in which they were directly interested—for example, the supply of raw material and the ex-German colonies—the Dominions' own representatives would be entitled to present their case. On the motion of Mr. Lloyd George, the Conference added India to the other Dominions, and she became entitled to the same representation as other small nations, e.g. Belgium. We considered, too, Russia's representation, but as no representative of the United States was present, the Conference agreed that it could reach no useful conclusion.

The Imperial War Cabinet met several times during December to make definite decisions on the principal questions which must be discussed as soon as the Peace Conference met. President Wilson's impending visit also made this necessary, for the Government would have to discuss the main issue of the Peace with him when he arrived in London.

The Cabinet's decisions at these eventful meetings have passed into history, moulding the future of the Empire, and indeed of the whole world. We defined our attitude towards the Fourteen Points, the ex-German colonies, Reparations, Self-determination, and the League of Nations. Though they cordially accepted the principle of the League, many members hesitated in doubt upon the extent and manner in which it would be applied. Just what President Wilson had in his mind nobody was able to say, but from his public utterances it appeared that he had no idea of a super-national body

in which the sovereignty of nations would be merged. His references to the League had been so general that he did not seem committed to any definite scheme. What attitude, therefore, ought the Cabinet to take? Having accepted the principle, ought it to follow blindly the leadership of the President and thus stand bound to whatever proposal he might recommend to the Peace Conference? Or should it endeavour to secure his support to a draft put forward by the British representatives? The Cabinet wrestled long and earnestly with this knotty problem. Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts had prepared two most valuable draft covenants, but the Cabinet felt that these went farther than anything the President's speeches suggested and that it would be most unwise to out-Herod Herod. In the end the full Cabinet reaffirmed the decision of October, and the Prime Minister was left to shape a course which should as far as possible effect the views of the majority of members.

There remained, however, to decide another vital question. Was the League—whatever shape it took—to be the corner-stone of the Temple of Peace or the cross upon the dome of the completed edifice? In other words, was the making of Peace to precede or follow the establishment of the League? The idea of a League of Nations obsessed President Wilson. To him the League was everything, and the terms of peace subsidiary and relatively unimportant. But some of the Cabinet very strongly dissented from this. America's circumstances, very different from the circumstances of the Empire and its Allies, enabled her to take a detached view of the conditions created by or arising out of the war. Her withers were unwrung; she had entered into the great struggle late and had suffered very little. The Allies recognised fully all they owed to her, and admitted that one of the reasons why the war had ended so suddenly was the blow which the movement of millions of American troops and the inexhaustible reserves the great Republic had at her command had inflicted upon the *moral* of the enemy's battle-worn legions. But acknow-

ledging this and even prepared to concede her the place of honour in the peace negotiations, they were not inclined to build the Temple of Peace upon the shifting sands of a League of which they knew nothing. The Peace must come first, a just and practicable peace, a peace that would recognise not only the crime committed against humanity, the havoc and the slaughter, and the claim to reparation of those who had suffered as far as reparation was possible, but a peace that would consider also the economic circumstances of every nation concerned and of the civilised world. Then we could busy ourselves with a League of Nations to enforce the peace and prevent wars.

By the terms of the Armistice, the Fourteen Points had been adopted as the basis for the terms of Peace. I had very strongly opposed this, but it was done ; so the Peace Conference, when it met, would not be free to demand what terms it thought just, right, and practicable. Beyond the Fourteen Points it could not go. To these points the Allies had agreed out of deference to President Wilson, but they owed a duty to their own people who had suffered so much. To redraw the map of Europe, to build up a new world upon the ruins of the old with hands tied by the Fourteen Points was a task unimaginably difficult ; but to make peace and leave all these things to the shadowy League, the faintest outlines of which we could now scarcely discern, was folly, and worse.

The Cabinet reviewed the report of the Committee on Indemnities and Reparation, of which I was chairman.¹ We had investigated the economic effects of any indemnity, the amount that Germany should and could pay, and the manner in which she should make these payments. We had not considered whether, under the terms of the Armistice, we were entitled to ask for any indemnity, but we suggested that no real distinction could be drawn

¹ The other members were Lord Cunliffe, ex-Governor of the Bank of England, Sir George Foster, of Canada, Professor Hewins, and Mr. Walter Long (Lord Long).

between payment by way of indemnity for the cost of the war and payment by way of reparation for damage done by the enemy to property. It might be contended that reparation—that is, payment for damage actually done—should have precedence, because of the greater urgency. The plight of Belgium demonstrated this. But that did not mean that while Belgium and France were entitled to be paid for the damage Germany had inflicted upon them, the Empire was to receive nothing. The injuries inflicted upon British trade were deep-seated, and their effect more lasting than the flesh-wounds suffered by France and Belgium, cruel and extensive though they were. The Committee had considered evidence which sought to establish that, broadly speaking, the payment of an indemnity seriously dislocated the economic life of the nation receiving it. This would mean that the payment of an indemnity would strengthen Germany and weaken her opponents, that an indemnity would help Germany and not the Allies.

As for the amount that Germany could pay, the evidence had been very vague. Some witnesses believed that Germany could pay very little indeed—not more than 60 to 125 millions a year. But these witnesses were no doubt affected by the fact that they had associations with and interests in Germany. On the other hand, Lord Cunliffe, formerly a Governor of the Bank of England, and a leading financial expert and a member of the Committee, concluded that Germany could pay 1,200 millions a year or more. The Committee believed that it was not intended to say how much Germany could pay, but, like any other tribunal, to fix an amount sufficient to cover the damage for which the plaintiff nations claimed compensation. One thing was certain—if Germany had won the war, she would have made the Allies pay to the last farthing of their capacity. Besides, it was the clear duty of the civilised world to impose an indemnity that would make not only Germany but all predatory Powers, who might feel tempted to follow her example, realise that war was a game which did not pay.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The discussion upon the German colonies occupied us for some time. First we considered those in Central Africa. The French were administering the greater part of Togoland and the Cameroons, but this did not prejudice their final disposition. Several members expressed the hope that the United States could be induced to share in any control that might be necessary in Equatorial Africa, and the Cabinet rejected the idea of a condominium, believing that America should assume a definite responsibility. During the summer session of the Cabinet members had pointed out that the British Empire should not assume new burdens in world-government if the United States undertook none. If America would help in the guardianship of backward peoples, she would do a grand work for the world. The Cabinet hoped also that America might interest herself in Constantinople, Armenia, and Palestine, where the guardianship should not be postponed until after the world had established its League of Nations.

In these fields discussion was not likely to lack sustenance or variety. Inevitably the emphasis laid upon "guardianship," "responsibility," as distinguished from annexation, should suggest mandatory rather than possessory titles. But in what way did "mandatory occupation" over any territory differ from possession? It was held that "mandatory occupation" did not involve anything in the nature of a condominium or international administration, but administration by a single Power on certain general lines, laid down by the League of Nations. Members pointed out that as the Allies had accepted the principle of "self-determination," mandates could not be allotted to this or that Power without the consent of the population affected. This applied particularly to places like Palestine, where both the Jewish and Arabic elements held very definite opinions on the mandatory power they desired.

This new factor of "self-determination" made it necessary that the position of the ex-German Pacific colonies and of South-west Africa should be clearly indi-

cated. The Australian representatives pointed out that while the principle of "self-determination" was entirely proper in certain countries, it ought not, and indeed could not, be applied to territories like New Guinea. For one thing, the inhabitants were in a very primitive stage of civilisation; some of the tribes had advanced little beyond the Stone Age. A referendum to ascertain the wishes of the people there would be farcical, particularly as it would be difficult to locate some of them in a country white men had never visited, and a hundred times more difficult to indicate clearly in the restricted vocabulary of their languages the principles involved in this grand democratic idea. Then, again, the geographical position of New Guinea would prevent the Australian Commonwealth from allowing this territory to pass to other Powers. The representatives of New Zealand and South Africa maintained similar attitudes upon Samoa and South-west Africa. Lord Sinha, on behalf of India, urged that, whatever was done in Africa and the Pacific, whether East Africa was retained as our possession or assigned to another Power, there should be an open door for Indians, and that they should not be subjected to the disabilities and restrictions enforced in other parts of the Empire.

The Australian representatives demanded now that the Cabinet should definitely exclude New Guinea, Samoa, and South-west Africa from the operations of the mandatory principle, for they saw in this principle, with its corollary of the referendum, and in the conditions urged by India, something incompatible with their great policy of a White Australia—a menace, indeed, to the national safety. This the representatives of New Zealand and South Africa vigorously supported, and the Cabinet so decided.

A telegram from Paris suggesting that the Allied Great Powers should be invited to appoint five plenipotentiaries each, the smaller Allied Powers three each, the new States recognised as Allied two each, States in the course of formation one each, neutral States one each, raised the

problem of how we were to be represented at the Peace Conference. The telegram proposed that the summonses might be issued to representatives of Allied Great Powers at all sittings and committees, smaller Allied Powers and new Allied States to have the right to be represented at all sittings at which questions directly interesting them were to be discussed ; possible representatives of States in course of formation and neutral States to attend when summoned by the Great Powers to sittings devoted to discussion of their interests and desiderata. The telegram suggested, too, that the Congress (Peace Conference) should be composed of two phases : (1) the settlement properly speaking of the war ; (2) the eventual organisation of a Society of Nations.

We discussed the telegram and a draft reply. The representatives of Canada and Australia strongly opposed the representation proposed for the Dominions, pointing out that upon this basis their two great countries would have less representation than Portugal and Sweden, one a small Power, which, as Sir Robert Borden pointed out, had put less men in the field than Canada had lost, and the other a neutral nation, which of course had not suffered at all in the war. He asserted that the people of Canada would regard as intolerable a scheme which admitted the representatives of Portugal and excluded those of the Dominion. The effect upon public opinion in Canada if the proposals were accepted he did not dare to contemplate.

I pointed out that the League of Nations would be one of those questions at the Conference which would most vitally affect the Dominions. In fifty years the white population of the British Empire would probably exceed the population of Great Britain. When the Conference discussed this, surely the Dominions were as entitled as neutrals to state their aspirations. Australia had put and kept more men in the field than Belgium, and deserved as much representation. Sir Robert Borden strongly urged that the delegation should be selected in part from a panel upon which each Prime Minister from the Dominions

would serve, and that one or more of these Prime Ministers should be called from time to time, as occasion might require, to sit on the delegation representing the whole Empire at the Conference.

The Cabinet approved this idea of a panel, and Mr. Lloyd George agreed that the Dominions and India should have the same representation as Belgium, Serbia, and Rumania. These decisions we embodied in the following resolution :

(a) Representatives of the British Dominions and India ought to be present at the opening session and at any other session of the Peace Conference or the Allied Preliminary Conference (should it be held) at which Belgium and other smaller Allied States were represented.

(b) The British Dominions and India should in all respects have the same powers as, and be on an equal footing at the Conference with, Belgium and other smaller Allied States.

(c) The Prime Ministers of the Dominions and the representatives of India should be placed on a panel from which part of the personnel of the British Delegation could be filled according to the subject for discussion.

These days were packed with work, in which the representatives from what only a few years before were despised Crown Colonies shared with the statesmen of Great Britain decisions that directed the very blood of civilisation. I have filled the canvas with considerable detail, going out of my way to relate many things stated ably before. This I have done not so much to limn the spectacle of Britain shaking off the mesh of war as to demonstrate my thesis that the Empire has grown from seed to plant, to flower, to fruit naturally and unsensationally, in a perfect curve of evolution.

CHAPTER VI

PEACE AND THE PEACE CONFERENCE

THE inaugural meeting of the Peace Conference was a most impressive ceremony ; the world has seen nothing like it in all its long and chequered history. The representatives of all the civilised nations, those of Russia and the enemy Powers alone excepted, were there assembled. Men whose names had been household words through all the dark and dreadful days of war, and those less widely known, but to whom millions looked for counsel and guidance, mingled together, exchanging greetings, recalling incidents, stirring and grave, of the Great War now so happily ended. And in the eyes of all was the light of hope, on their lips smiles, and in their hearts joy so intense as to baffle expression. *Gloria in excelsis Dei !* War was gone, and Peace, long banished, had returned once more to the children of men who for years had walked in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. It was a great and joyful day, and all the world turned its eyes expectantly towards the Conference in the confident hope that it would lay deep and sure the foundations of the new world, from which war, injustice, and misery would be for ever banished.

But when the effervescence of the opening day had passed off, and the representatives settled down to the great task which confronted them, the cross-currents of conflicting interests began to make themselves felt. Human nature is a curious and complex thing. Men passionately denounce war, but will not pay the price of peace ; they cry aloud for redress for their own grievances, but they contemptuously refuse redress to others. They talk loudly and long about justice, but

what they really mean by justice is the advancement of their own interests.

THE TASK OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference was confronted with an almost super-human task. The world looked to it to perform miracles, but it was in danger of not being able to do anything. The Fourteen Points circumscribed it. And it was not as other Conferences: men expected it to work in the light of day—"Open covenants openly arrived at" was the first line of its great charter.

The inspiring idea of making a world fit for heroes to live in, while all the world and his wife looked on, made an irresistible appeal to the multitude. But in an assembly recruited from nearly every country in the world, in which men of all colours, creeds, and races rubbed elbows together, which seemed to be a modern expurgated edition of the Tower of Babel, this was a counsel of perfection, upon which even the greatest idealist turned his back. And so, quietly, without roll or drum or funeral note, "open covenants openly arrived at" having duly served its purpose of tickling the ears of the groundlings, was placed on the topmost shelf, and the work of the Conference was divided up amongst committees. And I doubt if ever there was a conference since the world began in which so little was done in public and so much behind closed doors. The plenary sittings of the Conference were palpable shams.

THE BRITISH DELEGATION AT WORK

The members of the British Delegation—that is to say, the members of the British War Cabinet nominated by Mr. Lloyd George, and the Dominion Prime Ministers and their colleagues—were drafted to various committees. Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Balfour¹

¹ Sometimes both Mr. Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law accompanied Mr. Lloyd George; usually, I think, one. Of course a great deal of the negotiation was done quietly, by means of conversations and interviews.

comprised Britain's representatives on that inner council known later as the Council of Four, which for all practical purposes controlled the procedure of the Conference, re-made the Map of Europe, and drafted the Peace Treaty. To the Dominion Prime Ministers were allotted positions on various committees and commissions.¹

There was plenty of work for all. The committees collected evidence, discussed principles, settled details, prepared reports, made recommendations ; but they had no executive power.

They did very useful work. They usually sat daily. To what extent they influenced the Council of Four is an open question. Much, no doubt, depended upon the committee and the recommendations it made. Where a committee, providentially inspired, advised action along lines which found favour in the sight of the majority of the Council, its advice was followed. But where, pigheadedly persisting in its errors, it suggested a course which did not meet with the approval of the great ones on the Council, its report was ignored.

THE DOMINIONS' INFLUENCE

But the influence of the Dominion Prime Ministers was not confined within this narrow and uncertain sphere. As members of committees they shared whatever influence these bodies were permitted by the Council to enjoy. But as members of the British Delegation they exercised a direct and potent influence over the Council itself. At frequent intervals, sometimes daily, they met the representatives of the Empire on the Council of Four, and heard from the lips of Mr. Lloyd George what had been done and what was in contemplation. And on most of the important clauses of the Treaty and on the great questions that had to be decided in order that the

¹ I headed the British Delegation on the Reparation Commission, and was appointed Vice-President of that body by its members. I also served on the Labour Commission which drafted the Charter of Labour. General Smuts was on the Committee appointed to draft the Covenant of the League.

work of drafting the Treaty might go on, discussions took place and decisions were arrived at. Mr. Lloyd George was not, of course, instructed what he was to do or say ; but, asking for advice, he heard and usually acted upon the views of the majority as modified by interchange of opinions.

Generally proceedings were most harmonious. The Dominion Prime Ministers heard Mr. Lloyd George's views, and he heard theirs, and it very rarely happened that, after discussion, agreement was not reached.

OCCASIONAL STORMS

But occasionally when questions upon which some members held very strong opinions were under discussion, the usually placid surface of the waters became a little ruffled, and once or twice there was produced the dialectic equivalent of what seamen are wont playfully to call "a moderate sea." But these storms were rare and short-lived, for at the back of all the differences of opinion there was goodwill and the realisation that we could not afford to quarrel, for none of us—and this applied with much stronger force to the Dominions—standing alone, could do one-tenth as much for the peoples we respectively represented as we could by united action. And in any case, our circumstances precluded any practicable alternative.

POSITION OF DOMINION MINISTERS ON BRITISH DELEGATION

The positions occupied by members of the Imperial War Cabinet and the British Delegation to the Peace Conference were very different from those of ordinary Cabinet Ministers. When a member of a Government in Britain, or in any one of the Dominions, finds himself in a minority on a question of vital importance, he usually resigns. And although the consequences of a Minister's resignation in such circumstances may embarrass a Government, or even overthrow it, yet if he differs from

his colleagues on a question involving a great principle, his action is not only generally approved, but expected. The position of a Dominion Prime Minister on the British Delegation was very different. The people of the Dominion looked to him to conserve their interests. They believed in the Empire, they realised that its strength depended upon unity amongst its members. They expected him to do his uttermost to maintain that unity, but they also expected him to safeguard jealously the interests of the Dominion and to see that the maintenance of unity was not made an excuse for merging its identity in that of Britain. The Dominions expected their Prime Ministers to do all that was possible to safeguard their interests, but they most certainly did not expect them to resign, or, by refusing to attend the Delegation, notify the world at large that there was a serious breach in the unity of the Empire. I do not say, however, that in certain circumstances a Dominion representative would not have been justified in withdrawing from the British Delegation. The circumstances of nations differ : that which is vital to the existence or welfare of one may be relatively unimportant to another. Each of the Dominions, while having many interests in common with each other and with Britain, has some interests peculiar to itself.

“ WHITE AUSTRALIA ” POLICY

The “ White Australia ” policy in the Conference illustrates very well indeed the kind of principle of which we speak here. Suppose, for example, that in 1919 the Australian representatives at the Peace Conference had found themselves in a minority in the British Delegation on this question. This might well have happened, for, as is well known, it was proposed to insert what was termed a “ racial equality ” clause in the Covenant of the League of Nations. The proposal was very strongly supported. Some members of the Council of Four gave it their private blessing. And in the congenial

atmosphere of the polyglot Conference, the idea of an "open door" through which all the nations of the earth could come and go at will, and perhaps find also an unrestricted market for their goods, developed apace, and the difficulty was not to find those who thought the proposal wise and good, but those who turned a resolute back upon its meretricious glitter. And this went so far that the representatives of Australia seemed to be almost isolated, a tiny patch of white in a great sea of colour. It is not my purpose here to narrate how it came about that, despite the unsympathetic attitude of an overwhelming majority in a Conference in which were represented nearly 1,000 millions of people—800 millions of which were coloured—the policy of a "White Australia" triumphed.

It is enough to say that the forces in favour of the "open door" were unsuccessful. But suppose, I say, that things had taken a different turn, and that in the British Delegation—representing, as it did, an Empire in which more than four out of five of all the millions gathered under its banner were coloured—the Australian representatives had found themselves in the minority, what ought they to have done? What would Australian people have expected, nay, demanded that they should do? Candidly, I do not know. I do know what I should probably have done, had the tide turned against us. But in the British Delegation we had a Court strongly sympathetic and ready to look at the question from the Australian point of view. And so, once it was made quite clear that upon it Australia could not compromise, there was no doubt as to the attitude of the representatives of Britain and the other Dominions. And I cannot imagine any more convincing proof of the immense value to the Dominions of membership of the Empire than the deference paid by the Peace Conference to its wishes. Australia, as a portion of the Empire, was powerful enough to induce the Conference to support its national policy. Australia outside the Empire would, although the nation were armed to the teeth and pre-

PEACE AND THE PEACE CONFERENCE

pared to fight to the last ditch for what it believed essential to its national existence, have failed to turn the Conference from what was only too obviously its settled purpose.

EFFECT OF THE FOURTEEN POINTS ON THE PEACE

The waters of the river of Peace sluggishly meandered through the tortuous channels of the new diplomacy. President Wilson, who had seen several of his cherished Fourteen Points go down one after another like skittles in a bowling-alley, and who found himself being manoeuvred into reluctant acquiescence in all that was done, realised that unless he took a firm stand he would be left without one point out of the whole fourteen to lay as a votive offering on the altar of his country, to enhearten his supporters, and confuse his enemies, who were disconcertingly numerous and active. And so the order went forth that the League should be first and the Peace second. And as he said, so it was done ; for although his colleagues on the Council of Four, if left to themselves, would have reversed this order, making first the Peace and then the League to be the guardian of its temple, they realised that if they were not to precipitate a first-class crisis, they must in this matter let the President have his own way. And so the Peace upon which the future of the world depended was held up for months.

And this was very bad indeed for the world. For over four years there had been an orgy of destruction. The creative energy of the western world had been perverted to this savage and bestial purpose. But although the world was at war and concentrated its efforts upon the work of destruction, the needs of the community had still to be supplied. The fighting forces and the civil population had to be fed and clad and the social life of the community carried on. In Britain every man, woman, and child that could work had been employed. Tramps disappeared from the roads, rich men whom time had placed upon the shelf, women, young and old,

rich and poor—all had been given work to do and had gladly done it. While the flower of the world's manhood had been withdrawn from industry, the rest of the population laboured diligently. After four years of war they had acquired new habits and a new outlook, and, if given an opportunity, would have been capable of great things.

But when the war unexpectedly came to an end, the nation, organised for war, was totally unprepared for peace. The millions who had been fighting desperately began to drift home and to demand their old jobs back again. The millions who had been carrying on so splendidly the economic life of the country while the fighting went on were thrown on the industrial scrap-heap, or compelled to return once more to their dusty shelves, or to pursue the futile round of fashion. All were dissatisfied: the men who had fought so heroically and endured such fearful hardships took up half-heartedly the prosaic tasks of peace, when these were offered them; those whom they displaced bitterly resented their relegation to their former useless rôles. Work is a habit not so easy to acquire, but very easy to lose. Idleness is the Mother of Discontent, and this grew apace in such congenial soil.

The effect of war upon the people had been like that of a drug: they had worked furiously and most effectively. Expressed in terms of output, the energy of the people had never been so great. If the nations could have just switched over from turning out munitions and other impedimenta of war to the production of things which they wanted so badly, mankind would have been spared much misery.

The war was over, but the world was strewn with wreckage, and was very poor. In some ways it would never be the same world as it had been; but if it was to be a world "fit for heroes" and for ordinary mortals to live in, only one thing could make it so, and that was work. The wreckage must be cleared up, the great ugly holes filled, the hideous heaps smoothed flat, ruined

factories rebuilt, smashed machinery replaced, and the thousand-and-one things the world wanted, but which during the war it could find neither time nor opportunity to produce, must be made.

And had Britain, caught unprepared for war, learned her lesson and prepared for the coming of peace, there would have been room for all. Had an effective, comprehensive scheme of national organisation been devised, not one need have been dismissed. There was work for all to do—for the millions of fighting men, and for those too who, formerly idle, had been drafted into the ranks of the industrial army during the war. To turn adrift millions of willing hands when the world was in such dire straits for want of things these could have helped to produce was a tragedy. It was not a question of finding overseas markets for what the new millions of workers could produce, for the market was at their doors.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

If Britain was to bear the huge burden of war debt, her people must not only labour diligently, but effectively. Nothing but the most up-to-date methods would serve. By efficient organisation, she had increased her output of munitions and the impedimenta of war far beyond what had been thought possible in 1914. What she had been able to do in supplying the demands of war she could do for the demands of peace. Cheaper power, more efficient methods of production, were needed. Her transport system wanted reorganising; tens and hundreds of thousands of new houses, houses fit for civilised people to live in, were needed, if the men who had, after fearful effort, saved the country from defeat and from disaster were to be fairly rewarded. Employment and a decent house to live in were all that these most modest heroes asked for. No doubt this would have involved much money; but if the war had gone on—as those in power fully expected it to do—100 to 150 millions per month would have had to be found. A nation which had been

ready to spend 100 millions a month on war could surely have spared 100 millions a year for the purpose of peace. If the money since spent on doles, which sap the energy and debase the character of the people, had been made available for the great scheme of national reorganisation, the country would have been very much richer and the people much healthier and less discontented. With the adoption of the most modern methods and a contented populace, Britain would have been far better equipped to hold her place against international competition ; but the fateful hour passed, the opportunity was let slip, and Britain, which had begun by muddling through the war and nearly losing it, went back to its traditional policy and drifted on to muddle through the peace.

AND ALL THE WORLD MARKED TIME

Work was the only thing that could save the world. It could not be saved by nostrums, but by forswearing sack and living cleanly. It had indulged in a fearful debauch. It must work. But it was obsessed, and its mind unsettled, by great expectations. Government and the governed alike fell victims to this blight. The nation marked time, living from hand to mouth, waiting for something to happen which would make work almost unnecessary.

What was it that the world expected from the Peace Conference ? Whatever they expected—beyond hoping for some wonderful settlement of all their troubles, they had not very clear ideas about it—the nations of Europe were all so keyed up by expectation that they were quite unable to settle down to work out their own salvation. Until the terms of Peace were made, the world could never face the drab facts of the position created by the war. The strain of war was so fearful that men could never have borne it had they not been inspired with the belief that with victory they would come not only to peace, but to an entirely new and wonderful world.

But the illusion that had been their inspiration during

the war was their undoing when the war was over. Instead of turning resolutely to the work of repairing the ravages of war, they marched around and around the citadel to the fanfare of trumpets and the clashing of cymbals, looking to the Peace Conference to perform some miracle that would put them not only where they were before the war, but in a far better position. Until the Peace terms were settled, there was no inducement to work. The enemy Powers feared they would be compelled to make reparation, and that the greater their poverty, the less they would be called upon to pay; while the Allied Powers who sought reparation strove, by leaving their ruined factories and battered countryside untouched, to induce the Conference to make the amount payable by the enemy Powers as high as possible.

And so the effect of postponing the making of Peace until after the Covenant of the League of Nations had been drafted and agreed to was to keep the world from settling down to work in deadly earnest.

If the Peace had been made in December 1918, as it could and would have been but for the Fourteen Points, the world would have faced its great task in earnest and without delay. But, as month followed month, without a settlement being reached, the nations manoeuvred for position, filled the air with lamentations, with demands for redress, resorting in fact to any expedient that would save them from facing the situation as it really was.

THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY

At last the great Treaty was completed, the scattered threads were all gathered together, and the draftsmen, working in feverish haste, prepared the draft, which everyone was supposed to know all about, but which very few, if any, outside the Secretariat had read through. The German delegates, having been previously supplied with copies, were summoned before the Conference, made their protests, and on June 15th, 1919, amidst the splendours of the Old Palace of Versailles, and the

glittering cuirasses of the magnificent soldiers of the picked regiments of France, the ceremony of signing the Treaty was staged.

That, too, was a great day—not great in itself, like Armistice Day, in which joy and relief lifted the world out of itself and broke down all barriers, but for what it stood for. It marked the formal end of the war! But apart from what it meant to the world at large and to other belligerents, it had a very special meaning for the Dominions. For their representatives had signed the Treaty as separate nations in exactly the same way as other nations had done.

CONFIRMATION OF DOMINION STATUS

Their status was thus again publicly recognised by the assembled nations, their equality with Britain one formally declared. The Dominion Prime Ministers signed for the Dominions on behalf of the King. What the Prime Minister of England had done for Britain, they had done for their respective Dominions. They had good reason to be satisfied.

Time had brought very great changes. In 1911 Mr. Asquith had said politely, but very firmly, that the British Government could not share the responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs. In 1919 not only was Britain ready, but anxious to do this. And stooping from her proud position of the Paramount Power, she had become merely *primus inter pares*. The most advanced of the Dominion representatives could not have asked more. A revolution had taken place. But in this, as in other phases of the development of the relations between Britain and the Dominions, the extraordinary elasticity of the conventions by which these are regulated permitted the use of the old forms under entirely new conditions. Each of the Dominion Prime Ministers signed on behalf of the King, as did Mr. Lloyd George for Britain. The equality of status was thus apparent and complete. But whereas the Prime Minister of

Britain signed for Britain on behalf of the King because he had tendered His Majesty advice to that effect, the Dominion Prime Ministers attached their signatures for quite a different reason. They signed on behalf of the King because, and only because, the Prime Minister of Britain had advised His Majesty that they should do so. If Mr. Lloyd George had not tendered such advice, the Dominion representatives would not have been authorised to sign the Treaty on his behalf. They could not tender advice to the King. They could not approach the King officially on this or on any other matter, except through the Governor-General of their Dominion. And any advice that might have seemed fit to tender, through this channel, could not have been accepted by the King unless and until his Ministers in London—that is to say, the British Government acting through the Prime Minister of Britain—had themselves advised him to that effect.

So that in form, the act of signing the Treaty involved no departure from the old order of things in which Britain's position in the Empire was unchallenged and unchallengeable, when she had been in fact as well as in theory the Paramount Power. It remains nevertheless true that, despite this adherence to old form, the signing of the Treaty of Versailles by the Dominions on behalf of the King marks the final stage in the new order of Empire relations.

For it does not appear that there are any more worlds left for the Dominions to conquer. They may, of course, become independent nations outside the Empire; but within its wide folds they have gone—in this direction, at least—as far as is possible. The structure of the British Commonwealth, although capable of almost unlimited expansion, can only develop along certain lines. The superstructure may be changed as circumstances require, but the ground-plan of Empire is definitely fixed. There can be no Empire without a monarchy. Responsible Government is an integral part of our system of government and, as developed in Britain and the Dominions, places all power in the hands of the people

acting through their duly elected parliamentary representatives. For every act done is done in the name of the King, who can only act as advised by his Ministers. The King of Great Britain is also King of the Dominions overseas and Emperor of India. In the Dominions the King has his Ministers duly elected by the people of these Dominions. But for reasons which are sufficiently obvious and which are referred to in another chapter,¹ he can only act on the advice of his Ministers in London. And this practice must continue as long as responsible Parliamentary Government exists in Britain.

¹ "Report of the Inter-Empire Relations Committee."

CHAPTER VII

THE 1921 CONFERENCE. ANGLO-JAPANESE TREATY. WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

AFFAIRS in Egypt,¹ as I have explained elsewhere, developed so alarmingly, early in 1921, that the Australian Government suggested that an Imperial Conference should be summoned immediately, although the Prime Ministers had expected, after signing the Versailles Treaty, that they would not meet in London again until 1922.

The position which confronted the British, Dominion, and Indian representatives assembled was without precedent. There had been Imperial Conferences before an Imperial Cabinet had been thought of. The machinery of the Imperial Cabinet had been fashioned on the anvil of abnormal circumstances by the hammer of war. During the war it had worked well and amply justified itself. It had been accepted by the people of Britain and of the Dominions as an instrumentality through which the various free Governments of the Empire could co-operate and ensure the unity of action essential to their safety. While war lasted, it had evoked little criticism. Even the most fanatic of those protagonists of Dominion autonomy, who in normal times had seen the spectre of Imperial Federation behind every bush, had not deemed it suspect. But the war was over, the hot passions generated in the struggle had become cold. The reaction had set in. Everyone made haste to forget the burning words of yesterday. Peace was on all men's lips, and suspicion and envy and hatred in all men's hearts. The world of 1921 was indeed a very different

¹ Vide "Egypt," page 172.

world from that in which the idea of the War Cabinet had been conceived and had taken shape and substance. It remained to be seen whether the machinery evolved¹ to meet the unprecedented conditions of war could be adapted to those of so-called peace.

The problems which confronted the Conference were very different from those with which the Cabinet had grappled during the war, but they were not less difficult. And many of them vitally affected the Dominions. What part were the Dominions to play in their settlement? There was no doubt that the Conference would afford them opportunities for discussion, but discussion, though well enough in its way, would not satisfy men who during the war had sat around the council-table making history and shaping the destiny of the Empire. Unless discussion were to be the prelude to action, unless they were to have a real share in shaping and controlling foreign policy, their status, of which they were so proud and about which they had spoken perhaps a little too boastfully, would be little more than a child's toy.

In the days before the red flood of war, the Dominion representatives had approached the portals of the Imperial Conference in the subdued and reverential spirit of worshippers entering a Buddhist temple, and they had listened to the representatives of Britain—urbane and graciously tolerant—in a mood little removed from that of devotees prostrate before its shrine. But since those far-off days there had been great changes. They, who had been children, were now grown up and had put off childish things. They were no longer impressed by lectures or flattered by being permitted to participate in ceremonious and arid debates. There were things to be done, and they wanted to take their part in doing them. Were they to be given an opportunity to act, as well as to talk, and to listen?

The opening speech of Mr. Lloyd George removed all doubts from their minds. The 1921 Conference con-

¹ Mr. Lloyd George had intended it to be a permanent Convention of the Constitution.

ducted its business on the lines of the Imperial War Cabinet. The Dominion representatives soon saw that, so far as lay within the power of the British Government, they were to have the fullest opportunity not only to discuss questions but to decide them. If they were not able to exercise that complete control the Imperial War Cabinet had exercised in 1918-19, it was not because the British Government sought to limit their authority, but because circumstances had changed.

After reviewing the situation in Britain and throughout the Empire, Mr. Lloyd George went on to say that "never has statesmanship in all lands demanded greater patience and wisdom. They¹ had made treaties of peace, but they could not fairly say that peace had been established in the world." He then turned to consider what effect a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty would have upon the relations between the Empire and the United States. The alliance with Japan had been of great service to the Empire and to the cause of peace. It had helped to avoid competition in naval armaments in the Pacific and in the Far East. Japan had been a faithful ally, and Britain wanted to preserve this well-tried friendship and apply it to all questions in the Far East, where Britain, like the United States, desired equal opportunities. Friendly co-operation with the United States was for us a cardinal principle, dictated by instinct quite as much as by reason and common sense.

THREE NATIONS TO BE SATISFIED

On the eve of my departure for England I had said in the Commonwealth Parliament: "One of the chief difficulties in the problem now confronting us lies in drafting a treaty satisfactory to Britain, Japan, and America. . . . The peace of the world depends upon an understanding of some sort between America and what

¹ When the Conference opened on June 21st all the Dominions except Newfoundland were represented. Ten British and Dominion Ministers and two representatives of India were present, besides officials and the Secretariat, exclusive of reporters—twenty-four persons in all.

is known as the British Empire. It might be difficult, some people think it impossible, but we ought not to be deterred by mere difficulties. . . . There is no possibility of Britain ever going to war with America. The British people will not have it, and there is an end of the matter. An alliance or understanding with America is essential, but we cannot afford to quarrel with the Japanese, and I believe that a renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty is in the best interests of the Commonwealth."

And this attitude towards America the Conference warmly supported. Canada, looking at the Anglo-Japanese Treaty from the angle of the United States, with which her interests and associations are so vitally close, alone opposed the renewal of the treaty, even with the modifications suggested.

ORIGIN OF THE TREATY

Now, the Conference faced in this treaty a very complicated problem. To appreciate it one must remember that the treaty had lasted twenty years ; that it had been made in 1902 to meet the menace of Russia's ambitions in Northern and North-eastern India—ambitions which had affected our own Dominions and India and the peace of the world ; and that for many years this menace was supplemented by the growing power and ambitions of Germany.

When the Imperial Conference settled down to debate the treaty in 1921, the Russian Empire in its old form had gone, and Northern Asia, formerly the centre of a powerful military autocracy, was chaotic. Germany, too, had ceased to be a formidable Power. And it was forcibly contended that as we no longer faced the situation which had called the treaty into being, a renewal was not only unnecessary but undesirable. But it was pointed out that a very similar situation might easily arise again, and without an alliance with Japan how were we to meet it ? Had not the treaty worked well ? Japan had helped to destroy Germany's naval bases in the Far

East, had supplied cruisers and destroyers for convoying troops from Australia and patrolling the Pacific, the Mediterranean, and the Cape Stations.

Of course everyone saw that we could not renew the agreement as it stood: first, because we wished to conciliate American public opinion; and secondly, because we had to adjust our obligations under the treaty to our obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations.

NO HOSTILITY TO AMERICA POSSIBLE

British policy—despite the hallucinations of a hostile American press—had always endeavoured to preserve friendly relations with America. As it was drafted originally, the terms of the treaty were open to misconstruction, but when he renewed the treaty in 1911, Sir Edward (now Viscount) Grey had removed any ambiguity by inserting a new article (Article 4) which excluded the possibility of war with America. The article reads as follows: “Should either of such contracting parties conclude a treaty of general arbitration with a third party it is agreed that nothing in this treaty shall entail upon such contracting party the obligation to go to war with the power with whom such treaty of arbitration is in force.” Lord Grey inserted this article deliberately because at that time he was endeavouring to negotiate—indeed had almost succeeded—a treaty of arbitration with America. Unhappily the Senate threw this treaty out. In September 1914, however, Lord Grey concluded, not a general arbitration treaty, but a treaty which is entitled “With regard to the establishment of a Peace Commission.” Under the terms of this all disputes between Britain and the United States are referred to a special Investigation Commission. The British Government notified Japan that it regarded the Peace Commission Treaty as equivalent to a general arbitration treaty, and that the condition subscribed in Article 4 of the Treaty of 1911 applied. The Japanese Government accepted this, so that the Anglo-Japanese Treaty could not in any way menace America.

NO CONFLICT WITH THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE

How far, we next asked ourselves, would the treaty conflict with the Covenant of the League of Nations, of which each nation was a member? It appeared that although an Anglo-Japanese Alliance might well exist to which the provisions of Article 21 of the Covenant would apply, and although it would be going rather far to say that Article 20 applied to the Covenant as it stood, or anyway to its objects and principles, Britain and Japan should modify any agreement so as to make it accord completely with the procedure for the avoidance of war and the settlement of disputes which the Covenant laid down. We could have an agreement containing a modified form of Article 1 of the Covenant, providing for full and frank intercommunication of ideas, followed by an agreement for mutual support in a war which broke out after all means of settlement provided by the Covenant had failed—a war in which the League did not take sides.

The Japanese Government entirely agreed with the views of His Majesty's Ministers in London, and the parties had informed the League that they intended, in the event of a renewal of the agreement, to conform to the Covenant.

JAPANESE FEELINGS

With this unimaginably difficult position the Conference had to deal, and the more we examined it the more complex it became. How were we to please America without offending Japan, and at the same time protect the Empire and maintain peace in the Pacific? Suppose that in 1914—the treaty, renewed in 1911, was to last until 1915, and could be terminated by twelve months' notice on either side—Japan had notified Britain that she intended to denounce the treaty? Should we not have thought that she had some motive, a desire to enter into some fresh alliance, and to isolate, embarrass, and menace our position? And would not

Japan, a proud and sensitive people, keenly resent the same action and interpret it as an evidence of our wish to take up with new friends and isolate her?

For weeks the Conference sought a way between the Scylla and Charybdis. The debate was remarkable for the wide divergence of opinion and the vigour and persistence with which these were sustained. Speakers agreed on one point only, that we should do everything possible to meet America. On other points they were poles asunder. They wanted to agree, but in none of the avenues they explored could they find a *via media*. If delay had been possible, they might have achieved a temporary solution, but the political *mañana* was not for those who opposed the renewal: to do nothing meant to leave the treaty alone. If the Conference could have reassembled in the following year, opponents of the treaty might have agreed to a postponement. But most of the Dominion representatives could not go to London in 1922.

A PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Some proposed a conference at which all countries bordering upon or having interests in the Pacific should consider questions affecting their interests or likely to affect the peace of the Pacific. This, they thought, would be an admirable form in which to decide the baffling problem of the treaty. The proposal appealed to men whose nerves had become a little frayed under the strain of a long debate. Most of the Dominion representatives, however, did not feel that they could remit the Anglo-Japanese Treaty¹ to an assembly in which they would be outnumbered. For this idea of a Pacific

¹ The Attorney-General (Sir Frederick Smith, now Lord Birkenhead) had advised that the Crown Law Officers had been wrong in supposing that due notice had been given, and that the treaty would terminate in October 1921—that is to say, after the expiry of the three additional months to which the parties had agreed in order to give the Conference an opportunity to decide the question. Therefore the treaty would continue in force until the expiry of twelve months after due notice had been given, or until the parties had mutually agreed to determine it.

Conference, beginning in a very modest way, developed under the stimulating effects of discussion until it literally surveyed mankind from China to Peru, for both these countries were to be represented, and with them of course all others, great and small, in North and South America.

When they added to this goodly company France and Holland and Portugal, and perhaps some others, for the Pacific is a mighty big affair, the members of the Imperial Conference saw that the proposal offered very little prospect of solving the question. But protagonists of the Pacific Conference met every objection until what had promised to be an assemblage of all the nations on earth became once more an exclusive gathering of representatives of the United States, Japan, China, and the British Empire. In this form it was not only unobjectionable, but offered opportunities for that *rapprochement* with America which all so earnestly desire and gave China a chance to state her own case. If such a conference could agree, it would assure peace in the Pacific and end the suicidal race for naval armaments.

But a Pacific Conference could not be held for some time, perhaps a year. In the meantime, if the Imperial Conference decided nothing, the treaty would remain. But the opponents of renewal strongly objected to this. Around and around this point the Conference turned, at times buzzing like an angry beetle impaled upon a pin.

“THE VOICE OF AMERICA”

One opponent of the treaty, arguing against any alliances at the moment, contended that we could not have any agreement with Japan, however negative, which would be acceptable to the United States, that the “Voice of America” had spoken irrevocably against the treaty. But although they felt that the Empire should refrain from offending America, most Dominion representatives insisted that we could not be expected to reject a policy essential to our safety, compatible with our

declared ideals, a policy of which we had no reason to be ashamed, so that we might accept a policy dictated by another Power. To do the bidding of the mythical "Voice of America," which was, after all, not the voice of the nation, but of a noisy and implacable minority, would win the contempt and not the friendship of the United States.

Again, those who opposed the renewal adjured the Conference to protect the interests of China, an appeal to which the protagonists of renewal were very susceptible. We were anxious to co-operate with America in maintaining China's integrity and in protecting her from exploitation. But how were we to do this? Not by words! Opponents of the treaty spoke as though by refusing to renew the treaty we would amply safeguard China. But who was to do this? America? How was she to influence China? By reason or by force? Was she going to have an understanding with Japan? Was she going to enlist the Empire on her side and coerce Japan if other means failed? Obviously Britain or America could exercise control over Japan in only two ways. One was through the treaty, which had maintained peace in the Pacific for twenty years and enabled the British Empire to influence Japan considerably. The alternative was war.

IMPLACABLE AMERICA

America would neither work with us nor allow us to act without her; those who opposed the renewal of the treaty must, therefore, face the position and see that for the renewal there was no substantial substitute. To rebuff a faithful ally without cause was to invite trouble, to denounce abruptly a treaty that had existed for twenty years would be reasonably interpreted by Japan as evidence of our intention to reverse our policy. A tripartite treaty would perhaps have been the most happy, and on the whole the best solution of the problem, but the traditional policy of the United States ruled this out.

At what conclusions the Conference would have arrived had not a new factor entered the situation we can only surmise, for the parties were at arms' length. The debate had generated much bad feeling and all efforts to bridge the gulf had failed.

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE PROPOSED

The new development arose from informal conversations between the United States Ambassador and the Foreign Secretary. The United States Government was prepared to make proposals for a Disarmament Conference at Washington, provided the British Government approved the idea and sent representatives. This suggestion, according so completely with their wishes, the British, Dominion, and Indian representatives cordially welcomed, and they authorised the Foreign Secretary to give the American Ambassador the necessary assurances immediately, and negotiations for the Washington Conference proceeded as smoothly and swiftly as one could expect in all the circumstances.

II

WHOSE IDEA WAS DISARMAMENT ?

There are good reasons to doubt whether the United States would have issued invitations to Washington had not the Imperial Conference given it so unmistakable a lead. It was, however, best in the circumstances that proposals for a Disarmament Conference should have come from America.

But certainly America did not generate the idea. It was in the air. No man or nation conceived it. In congenial soil it germinated spontaneously. The world was ready to welcome with open arms any practical scheme for the limitation of armaments. But the desire was inchoate until the representatives of the British Commonwealth gathered round the council-table.

True, the United States Senate had passed a resolution suggesting a conference, but its persistent opposition to

America's entering the League of Nations and co-operating with other Powers in the great problems which confronted Europe had made foreign nations disinclined to regard this as a sincere gesture for peace. For this scepticism they could hardly be censured, because while it extended an olive-branch to the world, the Senate authorised the greater part of the naval estimates for the ambitious programme which aimed at making America the greatest naval Power in the world. Anyway, nothing came of that resolution. The United States Government had ignored it and the Senate apparently allowed it to drop. I believe America recognised from the attitude of the Imperial Conference that unless she was prepared to suggest a means by which a naval policy in the Pacific acceptable to Britain might be evolved, her power of initiative would pass.

Members of the Conference had spoken plainly and enthusiastically of the limitation of naval armaments, urging that Britain should call a conference to effect it. This one may gather from the following extracts from their speeches published in the principal journals of the world, including, of course, those of America.

LLOYD GEORGE'S PLEA

Mr. Lloyd George said in his opening speech :

"Friendly co-operation with America is for us a cardinal principle, dictated by what seems to us the proper nature of things, dictated quite as much by instinct as by reason or common sense. We desire to work with the great Republic in all parts of the world. Like it, we want stability and peace on the basis of liberty and justice. Like it, we desire to avoid the growth of armaments, whether in the Pacific or elsewhere, and we rejoice that American opinion should be showing so much earnestness in that direction at the present time. We are ready to discuss with American statesmen any proposal for the limitation of armaments which they may wish to set out, and we can undertake that no such overtures will find a lack of willingness on our part to meet them."

And speaking on the second day of the Conference (June 21st), I said :

“ Now I turn from the consideration of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, Sir, to a question which is related both to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty and to naval defence—I mean the question of Disarmament. You said, Sir, and I am sure the world will be very glad to hear those words of yours, that you would welcome any suggestion and discuss with any Power any propositions for disarmament or the limitation of armaments. Your words come most opportunely. We ought not to underestimate the value of this Conference. America distinguishes between England and the Dominions in a very marked way—and a suggestion coming from you, backed by the Dominion Prime Ministers, might gain a hearing where the voice of England alone might fail. After all, the distinctions which Americans draw between us are easy to understand. History partly explains it. They see too, in us, replicas of themselves. They see us struggling and fighting towards the goal that they have already attained. And I think they are right in supposing that, subject to that determination which we have to achieve our destiny in common with each other and with Britain, we resemble so many Americas.

“ We want peace. We at least are free from the suspicion of Imperialistic ambitions. The world, tired of war, is neurotic—even while it cries for peace, force is the first thing to which it turns to redress its grievances. You cannot expect, you cannot hope for any more favourable moment than the present. If you fail to secure agreement for the limitation of armaments now, how can you expect to do so in the years to come ? Although the fires of the Great War are not yet cold, the race for naval supremacy has again begun. It creates vested interests in the various countries where this suicidal race is run. This vicious rivalry grows by what it feeds on. Every year it becomes more difficult to stop. *Speak, therefore, now on behalf of this gathering of Prime Ministers. Let us give the world, weary of war and staggering beneath its*

crushing burdens, a lead. Invite the United States of America, France, and Japan to meet us. We cannot hope that the world will beat its sword into a ploughshare, but at any rate it can stop building more ships. Let us stop naval construction and naval expenditure other than those necessary for the maintenance of existing units without prejudice to what may be agreed upon hereafter. In this matter the first step is everything. If the world resolves to stop making preparations for war, everything is possible ; until that step is taken, we are only beating the air.

“ Such an invitation issued with such authority behind it would, I think, find great support in America, and, I hope and believe, in Japan too. In ten years’ time, in five years’ time, both of these countries will be poorer ; they cannot continue such a competition indefinitely. If they persist, we and all the great nations of the world must follow their example. What hope does such a prospect hold out to the war-weary nations ? To stop naval construction pending a permanent settlement of the basis of naval power will not prejudice their interests. The relative strength of each will not be affected by stopping now. I do most strongly urge upon you to set an example, speaking, as you will be able to do, not merely for England, but on behalf of all those free nations whose representatives are gathered here. Let us show the world that these young nations gathered round this table have resolved to make their entrance into world-politics by setting an example which the world has long awaited. I am not without hopes that such an invitation on your part and such an example on ours will bring great good to the world and prove to be a turning-point in its history.”

We awaited the Conference eagerly. Conversations and exchanges of notes occupied the representatives of America and Japan and the Foreign Secretary (Lord Curzon), and the position, which at first had appeared very clear and definite, developed opaque spots of vague but formidable dimensions. It almost seemed that the conception of a Disarmament Conference had exhausted

the resources of American diplomacy. Certainly Washington officialdom proved singularly infertile of suggestions upon the manner in which this great idea should be applied to the circumstances of the Empire, and, characteristically, it closed the door to the suggestions of others.

Who, besides Britain and Japan, were to be invited to this conference? The whole world? And what was the Conference to do? Was it going to discuss, *inter alia*, the Pacific question? If not, then most members of the Imperial Conference felt that it could achieve very little. And we could not discuss the Pacific until we had decided what was the Empire's attitude to Japan. This involved our attitude towards the treaty. But we could hardly discuss the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty in a conference at which other Powers were present. Back, then, the Conference came to the bog in which it had been floundering when it grasped at America's suggestion.

Reluctantly the representatives of the Empire agreed that the invitation had left our difficulties with the treaty very much where they were. Any success the Washington Conference might achieve could come only through a satisfactory *modus vivendi* in the Pacific. The Pacific question was the pivot around which naval rivalry, disarmament, and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty turned.

If peace could be assured in the Pacific—and that assurance could come only through an agreement satisfactory to America, Japan, and the British Empire, which would provide adequate guarantees for China—then there would be no need to renew the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. But failing an agreement, the majority of representatives of the Empire held that a renewal of the treaty was essential to the interests of the Empire and the peace of the world. These views the Foreign Secretary conveyed to the American Ambassador, who was asked to ascertain how his Government would regard a preliminary Pacific Conference at which only representatives of America, Japan, and the British Empire would attend.

A DECISION AT LAST

But we still had to decide what was to be the Empire's policy towards the Anglo-Japanese Treaty pending the Conference. Ultimately we agreed that the Empire should not denounce the treaty until the Disarmament or Pacific Conference had satisfactorily agreed or until a new treaty had been drawn up to replace the existing one. Should the Conference not agree, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, adapted to the Covenant of the League, was to stand.

Of course, the suggestion for a Pacific Conference came to nothing. It was merged with the main Conference, which representatives of the Dominions attended with a standing their status as nations gave them. As for the deliberations and decisions of the Washington Conference, are they not written in the archives of the nations and known to all the world? By general consent the peoples regarded the Conference as a great success, and it really did achieve some notable things. It ended the acute naval rivalry between the United States and Japan and reacted upon the Empire. It evolved a *modus vivendi* which for the time being removed any danger of war in the Pacific, and it solved happily that problem on which the Imperial Conference had laboured so strenuously, but in vain—how to please America without offending Japan or prejudicing the interests of the Empire. It is unhappily only too true that time has shown that the decisions of the Conference were not final solutions of this or any problem. The thoughts of man turn towards war as the sparks fly upward. Forbid him the use of one weapon, and he cunningly devises another, generally more deadly, with which he may smite his dearest friend. The claws of the great battleships were clipped and their numbers pitifully reduced, and some of these monsters, carefully selected and decked with floral wreaths, were sunk in the sea to the muted peals of the joy-bells of universal peace. Then dawned the day of the not less deadly cruiser, the

monster submarine, the gigantic seaplane carrier, and the Dreadnought of the air.

OUR INCURABLE FEROCITY

With these toys, eked out by death-rays, poison gases, and other ingenious devices to shatter souls from bodies, the world now contrives to pass its idle hours, and, with tongue in cheek, talks of another conference. There is something about these formal gatherings of nations at which the cynic may smile. They are like those cures for dipsomania which salve the patient's conscience with the knowledge he has tried to cure his bad habits, but never seriously inconvenience him by preventing him drinking as much as he wants to drink.

Lord Palmerston, the greatest Minister for Foreign Affairs England ever had, looked with jaundiced eye upon conferences, and firmly resisted Prince Metternich's craving for "just one more."

But what better way is open to man? The Washington Conference did good work. That the effects of its decisions, like all human efforts, should have proved ephemeral does not obliterate its merits. Mankind stands upon the crumpled achievements of yesterday to prepare for the needs of to-morrow. We must not expect too much from conferences or be discouraged because we are unable to find in them a final solution for all our problems. Perhaps we ought not to expect too much from man either, but, looking upon him with the tolerant eye with which Southey surveys Satan, realise that in the case of "so old an offender we must not expect too much."

III

A DEBATE ON COMMUNICATIONS

Elsewhere¹ I have endeavoured to show that we may solve all our difficulties in co-ordinating the voices of our widely-scattered Dominions upon such problems as those involved in foreign policy with better communications.

¹ Chapter XI, "Foreign Policy": Communications, page 265.

This course I had urged upon the War Cabinet, and in the 1921 Conference the question was, at my suggestion, discussed at length. I commenced the debate with a formal motion, and speakers examined the possibilities of improving communication by land, sea, and air, by cable, wireless telegraphy, and wireless telephony. The debate covered a wide field, and to everyone it was obvious that here was the means by which we might at last achieve that voice in foreign policy which we so earnestly desired.

Yearly conferences had become essential if the Dominions were to exercise their rights effectively, but Australia and New Zealand could not send their Prime Ministers to Britain for six months in every year, and no less time would suffice for even the briefest visit.

AIR TRAVEL

The possibilities of improving communications in the air seemed almost limitless. A great authority, Sir Frederick Sykes¹ (Controller-General of Civil Aviation), had told me that airships were capable of making the journey between England and Australia in nine days. I pointed out that two Australians, Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith, already had flown from England to Australia in a heavier-than-air machine. An Empire air service was essential and Governments must pioneer the way. If the Dominions' share in the Empire government was to be effective, they must be in close touch with one another and with Britain.

WIRELESS

From the sea and air we turned to the ether. The unity of the Empire depended upon an Empire consciousness, and this could be developed only by disseminating

¹ Sir Frederick Sykes, who was present during the discussion, inclined towards the airship. The voyage of the *Graf Zeppelin* (November 1928) shows that the lighter-than-air machine has far to go before it can be a reliable and speedy method of travel.

more and more Empire news through the vast Commonwealth of Nations. The instrument for these essentials lay obviously at hand—wireless. But while other countries were active, the Empire did nothing to use this new and wonderful discovery.

The United Kingdom had two wireless stations—one conducting services with the United States and the other with Canada. Some low-powered stations were working in other parts of the Empire. The range of these was very limited, and their equipment hopelessly out of date. There was no direct inter-Empire wireless service.

I said that I was not wedded to any particular scheme, but that we could not afford to leave things as they were. I cared not how we achieved a better system so long as we did achieve one soon.

MR. CHURCHILL BACKSLIDES

I suggested that all these things, communications by sea, air, or wireless telegraphy and telephony, we should refer to a committee of the Conference, which could thresh out the details of some practicable schemes and submit them later for early action. To this the Conference agreed.

Generally, all endorsed what I had said. It remained for Mr. Churchill to enliven what had been a somewhat heavy debate with a few comments, which, coming from him, were distinctly amusing. Mr. Churchill entirely agreed that we should have better communications. He recognised that the British Empire must develop a strong Empire atmosphere; that we should know in each part of the Empire what the other parts were thinking. War had delayed the wireless chain, but Britain had now completed the Oxford station. The next link in the Empire chain was Cairo, and he thought that the station would be ready in November.

"Now," said Mr. Churchill, "while I believe very strongly that we must have better communications of all kinds, we must bear in mind that a great wave of exhaustion has swept through the world after the fighting."

Whether we looked, he continued, at the comfort or speed of steamships, or at the amount of money available, or at the public interest in external affairs, the mind and resources of the nation were exhausted. The Empire needed a period of repose to gather strength. It could not be a long period—it might only be a few years. He agreed that it was deplorable to see the newspapers reporting the most trivial incidents; but this was partly a sign of temporary public fatigue, which would pass. While we saw exactly what we wanted to do it would be a mistake to propose very large or drastic action involving immense schemes and a huge expenditure of public money. The British Government would do the best it could, driving ahead as far as it could. It would have plans made out on good lines, and it would bring about an agreement between the different parties. Then as their strength revived, it would carry these ideas into action.

Members of the Conference listened to all this astounded, hardly able to believe their ears. Wonders surely would never cease, for they had lived to hear Mr. Churchill advocate a "policy of repose." Mars advocating peace, the head of the Soviet denouncing the Third International, would not have surprised them more. A "period of repose," and those "good plans" to which all, even the Opposition, were to agree, and then hibernation until the period of repose had passed! And all these soothing reactionary lullabies from Winston Spencer Churchill!

IV

After allowing a decent interval for Mr. Churchill's plaintive appeal for "good plans and a period of repose" to sink deeply into the plastic minds of members, the Conference remitted the question to a committee over which Mr. Churchill presided. The personnel of the Committee was numerous, for it contained British Ministers, officials, Dominion representatives, experts, and a representative of the British press, Sir Robert Donald.

THE NORMAN SCHEME

I set out the situation as I saw it. Mr. Churchill called upon Sir Henry Norman and the experts, among them Dr. Eccles, a man of world-wide reputation, to explain the Norman scheme. Shortly stated, it provided for a number of relay stations 2,000 miles apart. From the standpoint of an Australian, the Norman scheme had many serious drawbacks. It did not establish direct communication with Britain. If one station in the chain failed for any reason at all, communications over the whole line might break down. Australia as the last station would be the principal sufferer. Receipts would have to be shared between the five stations. Obviously the line would be seriously endangered during war. The scheme bitterly disappointed me. We who expected to fly on the wings of light were offered a limping camel.

I CRY IN THE WILDERNESS

I had been advised that a direct system of communication was possible, and could not understand why the experts should force upon us this scheme of relays. I made up my mind that Australia would have nothing to do with it. As I was the only advocate of direct inter-Empire wireless, the advocates of the relay system advanced in mass formation against me. For days, and indeed weeks, I listened to the Postmaster-General (Mr. Kellaway¹) and Sir Henry Norman and his experts patiently explaining their pet scheme. Appreciating how entirely ignorant of the science and technique of radio telegraphy and telephony I was, they delivered themselves of kindergarten lecturettes for my especial benefit. These I received in a fitting spirit of sceptic humility. As time passed and I persisted in my unbelief, their polished urbanity became a little ruffled, and, in short, some very interesting exchanges passed between us. Their arguments were learned but entirely unconvincing. Looking upon me as a hopelessly and utterly misinformed

¹ Now of the Marconi Company.

visionary, they tried to make it clear why direct communication was unworkable. They admitted that under exceptionally favourable circumstances direct communication between Australia and British stations might be possible at certain periods of the day, but no more. A reliable, continuous service was out of the question, and anyway the equipment would cost millions.

In the light of subsequent events the solemn and didactic assurances of the Norman experts that direct wireless communication throughout the Empire was impracticable make most interesting reading. They who were so very sure that they were right have been proved hopelessly wrong. The dream of ignorant visionaries has triumphantly demonstrated itself practicable, and the much-lauded Norman relay system is dead—was, in fact, never really alive.

But when the Churchill Committee sat, these things lay in the womb of time, and the voices of the Norman experts boomed trumpet-like. It was not so much what they said which made our opposition seem presumptuous—for their arguments were, so to speak, laminated, and gained whatever weight they had through almost endless repetition—but they were men of great reputation talking on matters they had studied many years. The other Dominion Prime Ministers were deeply impressed, but I passed through the hail of words and polite invective with unruffled plumage. For as I saw them, they talked not as scientists seeking the truth, but as thick-and-thin champions of the Norman relay scheme, which, tied to their interests, obsessed their minds. They had determined that the Norman scheme was the only one possible, and, asked to look at others, clapped the telescope to their blind eye and truthfully declared that they saw nothing.

TWO GOOD HATERS

It must not be supposed, however, that they had entirely their own way. If Sir Henry Norman was there, so was Mr. Godfrey Isaacs. The interchanges between

these two most distinguished men and their supporters were of course most devastatingly polite, but far from dull, for beneath the conversation one sensed that no love had been lost between the two camps. Both gentlemen had the reputation of being good haters, and the word went round that here was staged an affair of outposts in an international contest—Marconi versus Telefunken.

Mr. Churchill, as I have already stated, stood for the Norman scheme, and when Mr. Churchill has established himself it is usually quite impossible to shift him by argument. He is so fertile of expedient and so mercurial that one can never corner him. He is here, he is there, he is gone, and again he is where he was before.

BOOK II

CHAPTER VIII

INTER-EMPIRE RELATIONS

A ZEAL FOR DEFINITION

THE British Empire is threatened from two quarters—from its enemies who want to destroy it, and from its friends who want to save it. Against attack from its enemies it is in some measure prepared; but the advice of well-meaning enthusiasts, inflamed by a burning passion to improve the Empire, and the suggestions of those restless spirits who think that because its Constitution is elastic it can be stretched in any direction and to any extent, are more subtle dangers against which it is almost defenceless.

Change is the law of life, and the Empire—an organic growth—is ever changing. But life is not as vapour melting into the air. Its normal changes attune themselves so exquisitely to environment, stage and audience move so perfectly in step, and change melts into change so smoothly that the process goes almost unnoticed. In the development of the Empire every change has taken its place on a stage ready set to receive it. The growth has been natural, unforced. Great men have helped to weave the fabric, fools and muddlers have marred it, but until lately, there have been no deliberate meddlers.

Recently, however, some, dazzled by its splendour and possibilities, have been bitten with the desire to experiment upon its fair body. They want to force its growth, prune excrescences, smooth down crudities; in short, they want to make an Empire after their own image.

The vagueness of its constitutional outline pains their sensitive souls. Its hopelessly illogical and inconsistent

principles offend their sense of proportion. They are obsessed with the fear that it will not work. They do not understand how it does work, and nothing will satisfy them but to pull it to pieces to "see how the wheels go round." They are quite confident that they can marvelously improve it—anyway, they insist that we should write its formulæ down in black and white.

Against this folly I have always set my face. None has stood more firmly than I for the right to full autonomous powers, or pressed more insistently for the recognition that the various nations of the British Commonwealth are perfectly equal in status; but, these things being freely accorded, I have always held that we can maintain the unity of the Empire only if we exercise the rights we all possess with the utmost discretion and watch that our acts do not deleteriously affect the Empire or any part of it.

The constitutional relations between the Dominion and Britain and between the Dominions *inter se* have proved wonderfully adaptable and elastic, but that elasticity and adaptability are limited. We must recognise that although constitutionally we in the Dominions or the people of Britain can do whatever would be possible if we were separate nations outside the Empire, some things we cannot do without grave dangers of disrupting the Empire. But we cannot write these things down in black and white. They depend upon circumstances. What is possible to one Dominion is not possible to all; an act which may be done safely to-day may lead to grave trouble if done in six months' time. The unity of the Empire depends upon the wise restraint with which its rulers exercise the limitless powers entrusted to them.

1917 RESOLUTIONS

The 1917 Conference discussed the question at length, and at the end passed the following resolutions:

"The Imperial War Conference is of opinion that the readjusting of the relations of the component parts

of the Empire is too important and intricate a subject to be dealt with during the war, and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities.

“It deems it its duty, however, to place on record its view that any such readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs, should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and of India as an important part of the same; should recognise the right of the Dominions and of India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations; and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary concerted action founded on consultation as the several Governments may determine.”

The matter was mentioned several times during the long-protracted sessions of 1918 and 1919, but the Cabinet postponed discussions until after the war, and the 1921 Conference agreed, after a most informative discussion, to an important resolution. In the light of the Inter-Empire Relations Committee a somewhat full résumé of the 1921 Conference discussion may be permitted. A quotation from my own speech at that Conference will appropriately introduce the question as the British and Dominion Prime Ministers then saw it.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

“It has been suggested that a Constitutional Conference should be held next year. . . . It may be that I am very dense, but I am totally at a loss to understand what it is that this Constitutional Conference proposes to do. Is it that the Dominions are seeking new powers or are desirous of using powers they already possess, or is the Conference to draw up a Declaration of Rights, to set

down in black and white the relations between Britain and the Dominions? What is this Conference to do? What is the reason for calling it together? I know, of course, the resolution of the 1917 Conference. But much water has run under the bridge since then. Surely this Conference is not intended to limit the rights we now have. Yet what new rights, what extension of power, can it give us? What is there that we cannot do now? What could the Dominions do as independent nations that they cannot do now? What limitations are now imposed upon them? What can they not do—even to encompassing their own destruction by sundering the bonds that bind them to the Empire? What yet do they lack? Canada has asserted her rights to make treaties. She has made treaties. She is asserting her rights to appoint an Ambassador in Washington. Are these the marks of slave States or of quasi-sovereignty? In what essential thing does any one of the great self-governing Dominions differ from independent nations? . . .

“We were Colonies, we became Dominions; we have been accorded the status of nations. Our progress in material greatness has kept pace with our constitutional development. Let us leave well alone. That is my advice. We have now on the agenda paper matters which mark a new era in Empire government. We, the representatives of the Dominions, are met together to formulate a foreign policy for the Empire. What greater advance is conceivable? What remains to us? . . . I know of no power that the Prime Minister of Britain has that General Smuts or any one of us has not. . . . Our presence here around this table, the agenda paper before us, the basis of equality on which we meet—these things speak in trumpet-tones that this Conference of free democratic nations is, as Mr. Lloyd George said yesterday, ‘a living force.’”

Later the Conference debated upon a motion to draw up an agenda paper for a Constitutional Conference to be held, if possible, in 1922. Three drafts had been prepared, one by a member of the Conference, the

others by officials, and all were submitted to the Conference.

These drafts aimed at setting forth the existing or proposed relations between the Dominions and Britain. It will be interesting to compare the provisions of the 1926 Conference report with the drafts submitted to the 1921 Conference. And I may again quote from my own speech :

WHY A DECLARATION ?

“ These drafts are in the main Declarations of Rights recognised by existing practice. Unless it is contended that these rights or any of them are in danger, such declarations are unnecessary, and serve no useful purpose. On the contrary, they may do much harm. They relate to the distribution of powers vested in the Dominions. . . . Originally all the powers now vested in the Dominions were exercised by Britain. The present distribution is the result of voluntary surrender to the Dominions by Britain of some of the powers inherent in her as a sovereign power.

“ This surrender has heretofore been made by :

“ (a) Statutes of the British Parliament creating Dominion Parliaments and Governments, and defining the ambit of their legislative and executive powers.

“ (b) In dispatches and communications passing between the British and Colonial and Dominion Governments.

“ (c) By conferences of the representatives of Britain and of the Dominions.

“ The distribution of powers had been gradual, extending over a long period of time. During the last few years the distribution has proceeded more rapidly.

“ It has never been the practice to attempt to set out in writing the precise limits of the powers surrendered by Britain to the Dominions or those retained by her. The reasons against any attempt to delimit the respective spheres of power and define the constitutional relations between Britain and the Dominions are obvious

and overwhelming. The great merit of the constitutional relationship existing between Britain and the Dominions is, and always has been, its elasticity. To this is due its wonderful adaptation to changing circumstances arising from the growth and development of the Dominions. To attempt to substitute for this a rigid constitution or to define or set out in writing the relationship between the Dominions is most undesirable. . . . As things now stand, it is possible in practice to reconcile that complete autonomy which the Dominions possess—which they exercise by virtue of British statutes and waivers by British Governments—with the sovereign rights of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and the unity of the Empire.

“The plasticity of the structure satisfies those who contend that we have the status of nations and who look with suspicion upon every attempt to create machinery to ensure unity in foreign affairs and naval defence as well as those who regard unity of Empire as more important than Dominion self-government. For the history of constitutional government in the Dominions is a record of the circumstances under which ever-widening powers were granted to them by Britain. Conflict between the theory and practice of the Constitution, between the sovereignty of Britain, the autonomy of the Dominions, and the unity of the Empire, has been avoided because it has seemed that there were no limits which would exhaust the reserve of powers which Britain granted to the Dominions as and when their circumstances seemed to demand them. Apparent inconsistencies evoked very little criticism, because there were, or seemed to be, no limits to modification, expansion, or readjustment. But if the Constitution were reduced to writing, the position would be very different. Any attempt to enumerate the powers or rights of the Dominions must necessarily exclude all thus omitted.

“It has been pointed out that the powers now possessed by the Dominions have been acquired through

surrender by Britain. Hitherto the powers of which Britain has divested herself have been confined to those necessary to the autonomy of the Dominions. The practical effect has been that the Dominions have the same powers of self-government as the Legislature and Government of the United Kingdom has over Great Britain and Ireland. There remains, however, a somewhat vague but very wide sphere over which Britain still retains her sovereign powers. Amongst these are the powers necessary to determine the policy of the Empire with foreign nations."

EMPIRE'S BASIC UNITY

"The basis upon which the British Empire rests is unity of action in foreign policy. The surrender by Britain to the Dominions of all these powers necessary for complete autonomy is in theory consistent, and has been found in practice to be compatible with that fundamental principle of unity without which there can be no Empire. But it is clear that no further surrender of her powers can be made without impairing that principle. And it has to be noted that as the powers incidental to its autonomy transferred by Britain to any of the Dominions did not affect the unity of the Empire, it was not the concern of any other Dominion or Colony than the one directly affected. But the position is now very different. If it be accepted that unity is the basis of the Empire, then it is clear that on foreign policy the Empire must speak with one voice. And it follows from this that Britain cannot waive any one of her rights to speak for the Empire without the consent of all the self-governing Dominions. For although in theory the ties between the different Dominions are the same as those which bind each Dominion to Britain, yet there is a very clear and real distinction to be drawn.

"It is not desirable to emphasise this point unduly, but it becomes necessary to note it. The explanation is to be found in the history and circumstances of the different Dominions and of the Motherland. The

advantages to each Dominion of its relations with Britain are obvious. And similarly, though perhaps in lesser degree, the advantages which Britain gains from these Dominions are quite clear. But the relations between the various Dominions *inter se* do not in all cases rest upon the same foundation. The right of the Dominions to an effective voice in moulding the foreign policy of the Empire is incidental to their autonomous powers over domestic affairs. It is self-evident that the Dominions may be involved in war through the Empire's policy in foreign affairs, and that the consequences of war may profoundly affect their internal policy. Further, the domestic policy of a Dominion may involve the Empire in war. Clearly, then, once it is admitted that the Dominions have a right to an effective voice in directing foreign policy, it follows that Britain cannot attempt to entrust to any one Dominion the power to take any action in regard to foreign affairs, except as and to the extent agreed upon by the representatives of the whole Empire."

* * * * *

Two years later Dominion representatives met again in London, but they did nothing to define more clearly than they were defined already the powers of the Dominions or the relations between the Dominions and Britain. They discussed the negotiation, signature, and ratification of treaties without changing the principles which had directed practice in this since the days of Versailles, and after debates upon the "C" mandates, the United States, defence, the position of Indians in other parts of the Empire, and foreign relations, left the situation exactly as it was.

II

INTER-EMPIRE RELATIONS COMMITTEE : 1926 CONFERENCE

The next development was the Inter-Empire Relations Committee Report. Some have hailed this as an epoch-

making document, and others call it a verbose and pre-tentious effect which changes nothing of the substance and likely to do a great deal more harm than good. But however we view the report, we cannot doubt that its *raison d'être* was to crown Mr. Mackenzie King with a laurel wreath, to save General Hertzog's face, and to help Mr. Cosgrave, whose position the irrepressible Mr. De Valera had made thoroughly miserable. It does these things indifferently well. Following the Pauline injunction, the compilers of the Report—evidently most conscientious and capable men—produced something that is all things to all men. Mr. Bruce, Prime Minister of Australia, declares blandly: "There is nothing really new in the status of the British Dominions as a result of the recent Conference. The rights now enjoyed have existed ever since the termination of the war." Mr. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, speaks quite differently, decorating the document with flowers of eulogy. "I believe," he said, "the work of this Conference will take its place in history by the side of those great charters which have stood in one form or another for a larger freedom." And General Hertzog, Prime Minister of South Africa, delivering himself on his return from Britain after the manner of a conqueror with his foot upon the dead body of his foe, declared that "the British Empire now exists as a name only."

Let us see for ourselves what the Report does or purports to do.

The Committee disclaims at the outset that it has attempted to lay down a Constitution for the British Empire, and its definition of the relations between Britain and the Dominions neither extends the authority of the Dominions within the sphere of domestic matters nor raises their status as self-governing communities. And it does not do so because in those matters they are like so many Alexanders without more worlds to conquer. Thus the Committee defines the position and mutual relations of the Dominions: "Their positions are auton-

omous countries within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate the one to the other in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. . . . Every self-governing member of the Empire is now the master of its own destiny. Equality of status, as far as Britain and the Dominions are concerned, is thus the root principle governing our international relations."

This statement of the position—which the Committee did nothing to create—in nowise differs in form or substance from declarations which Prime Ministers of Britain made at former conferences and repeated in the House of Commons and on the public platform. It was formally enshrined in the following resolution, unanimously supported by the representatives of every Dominion and of India: "In recognition of their successes and achievements in the war, the British Dominions have now been accepted fully into the Commonwealth of Nations. They have achieved a full national status; they now stand beside the United Kingdom as equal participants in the discussions and responsibilities of the British Commonwealth."

In what particular is this resolution or the statement made by Mr. Lloyd George at the 1921 Conference less precise? In what way are the status and powers of the Dominions either inferior to, or indeed in any way different from, those set out in the Report? When he returned to South Africa, General Hertzog became almost lyrical in his eulogies of the Report, which he considered as a veritable charter of liberties. But what new right does it confer upon the Union?

Upon his return from the Peace Conference in 1919, General Smuts, in the South African Parliament, said: "The Union Parliament stands exactly on the same basis as the British House of Commons, which has no legislative power over the Union. We have achieved a position of absolute equality and freedom, not only among the other States of the Empire, but among the other nations

of the world. Where in the past British Ministers have acted for the Dominions in respect to foreign affairs, in future Ministers of the Union will act for the Union. The change is a far-reaching one, which will alter the whole basis of the British Empire."

How could the Inter-Empire Relations Committee Report widen the powers or raise higher the status of the Union? When a State is the absolute equal of any other State in the world, including Britain herself; when its power to make whatever laws it pleases is plenary; when its Ministers are able to negotiate with foreign Governments—as General Smuts told the South African people, in 1919, Union Ministers could do—what more remains?

DECLARATIONS OF RIGHTS ARE USELESS

The Committee recognises that the difficulties of Empire government are not to be cured by Declarations of Rights, nor by grants of more power to the Dominions, for they are practical difficulties which arise from geographical, racial, and political circumstances. And in the last section of paragraph 2 the Committee strikes a subdued note—the inspiring patriotic fanfares of its opening bars die down, and the band shuffles off. The real work has now to be done. Here, as the Committee rather sombrely puts it, "We require something more than 'immutable dogmas.'" We know quite well what the Committee means, but its manner of expressing it is a little unfortunate, for the most hopeful thing about Empire problems is the complete absence of "immutable dogmas" and the amazing elasticity of those conventions, precedents, and practices of what is known as the "Constitution."

The Committee points out that to deal with diplomacy and defence "we require also flexible machinery which can be adapted to the changing circumstances of the world." And having said so much, it proceeds to consecrate itself to the effort, not merely to state, but to apply,

political theory to these problems. Let us see how far it has succeeded.

Having explained that the scope of the Report is limited to Great Britain and the Dominions (the position of India being defined by the Government of India Act, 1919), the Report turns to its main business—the relations between the various parts of the British Empire—and admits that the existing administrative, legislative, and judicial forms are not wholly in accord with the position set out in section 2; the development of the different parts of the Empire has been so rapid that they have outgrown the old forms that sufficed them years ago. In other words, although the child has become a man, and as a man his family and the outside world recognise him, he still wears knickerbockers, through which his long legs stick out grotesquely, and as a set-off against this he insists upon wearing a top-hat.

THE TITLE OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING

Under the Royal Titles Act, 1901, the title of the King is, "George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India." The Committee unanimously decided that His Majesty's title should henceforward be, "George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India." Upon this no comment is necessary; the alteration arises inevitably out of the treaty which establishes the Irish Free State. It takes nothing from and adds nothing to the status and dignity of the Crown. If the Committee had not been appointed, the alteration would have had to be made.

STATUS OF GOVERNORS-GENERAL

The Committee considered then the positions of Governors-General. "The present status of the Dominions,"

it believed, "required that the Governor-General should be a representative of the Crown, holding exactly the same position in the administration of public affairs in a Dominion as His Majesty the King held in Great Britain." It declared, too, that the Governor-General was not a representative of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain or of any department of that Government. "The channels of communication between Britain and the Dominions should be direct from Government to Government, and not, as under the usual practice, through the Governor-General." It is understood that the British Government is prepared to give effect to the Committee's recommendation.

Now, have we here changes of substance or material alterations of form, or just a reshuffle which leaves the status of a Governor-General and his relations with the Crown, the Government of Britain, and the Governments of the Dominions in all essentials where they were before? And the answer is, that except in one point, which the smooth verbiage of the expert draftsman covers with an opaque varnish from all save the few initiates, the furniture has merely been shifted a little and one or two pictures rehung. The room is the same. The Committee has brought nothing new to it, nor taken anything away.

The Governor-General, we are told, is henceforth to be the direct representative of the Crown. But surely we have always regarded the Governor-General as the King's representative. The Constitution provides that the King shall appoint him. When he appears in public, the National Anthem is invariably played. He is the Commandant of the armed forces of the Commonwealth of Australia. He is an integral part of the Parliament, and acts in place of the King; he must assent to Bills passed by both Houses of Parliament before they can become law. The Governor-General is, and always has been, the representative of the Crown; and if greater particularity is demanded, it may be fairly said that the people of the Dominions have always accepted the

Governor-General as the personal representative of His Majesty. It is, of course, quite true that he represents also the British Government, by whom he is appointed, and that until 1919 it was usual for the British Government to appoint him without more than formally consulting the Dominions. But since 1919 the practice has been changed: now the Dominion Governments are not only consulted, but have the right to make recommendations of persons whom they consider suitable to fill the office. In like manner it is quite settled practice for the British Government to submit names to the Dominion Governments and appoint the person approved by the Dominion Government or to choose one from the list of names approved by the Dominion. But I should be inclined to say that, generally, both Governments arrive at an agreement by exchanging views, and that the British Government makes the appointment only upon the recommendation or approval of the Dominions. How will the recommendation of the Committee alter this? We are told that the Governor-General is to be the direct representative of the Crown, and not of the British Government or any department of it. Very good! But let us see what this involves.

Assuming—what certainly is not true—that the Governor-General at present is not the representative of the Crown, that he is the representative or agent of the British Government—as he certainly is—how will the recommendation of the Committee affect his relations with (*a*) the Crown, (*b*) the British Government? Suppose him to be appointed by the King as the direct representative of the Crown—how will his position or status be altered? Take his appointment, how is that to be made? The answer is, upon the recommendation of His Majesty's advisers. But who are these to be? Will a Dominion Prime Minister advise His Majesty? Assume that he does so—that he submits a name or a list of names to His Majesty. What follows? The King must seek the advice of his Ministers in London, without whom he can do nothing.

The name or the list of names recommended by His Majesty's Ministers in, say, Australia, the King submits to his advisers in London, and when they have chosen, a Governor-General is appointed—on their advice. If they advise that none of the persons whose names the Dominion Government has submitted is suitable, the King does not accept the advice of the Dominion Prime Minister.

When the recommendation of the Committee is adopted, the British Government will appoint the Governor-General, and for all practical purposes in the same way as at present. Nor would the suggestion of the Committee materially alter the relations between the Dominion Government and the Governor-General and the Governor-General and the British Government. He would be neither more nor less the representative of the British Government than at present. Calling him the direct representative would not make him more so than he is. If the Governor-General wishes to consult or communicate with the Crown, how is he going to do it? Is it suggested that he should write to His Majesty? That perhaps he might do—but presumably he would have to supply a copy of his communication to the British Government. Anyway, the King could do nothing or say nothing without the advice of the British Government, to whom the communication of the Governor-General would be referred. The King can do nothing except upon the advice of his Ministers. If his Ministers in Canada or Australia tender him certain advice, the King must submit that advice to his Ministers in London, and must accept or reject it as they advise.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

As for the suggested alteration in the channel of communication, I need say no more than this—that at best it only widens the channel of direct communication between Prime Ministers which was arranged in 1919 and confirmed in 1921. Under the practice which

governed communications before the 1926 Conference, telegrams and dispatches went either direct from the Prime Minister of Britain to the Prime Minister of a Dominion or *vice versa*, or, as generally, from the Secretary of State for the Dominions to the Governor-General. The telegrams, though almost invariably addressed to the Governor-General, were intended for the Prime Minister of the Dominion and began, "For your Prime Minister." The Official Secretary to the Governor-General received the telegrams, decoded them, and furnished his Excellency and the Prime Minister with duplicate copies simultaneously. Some telegrams sent direct from the Prime Minister of Britain to his colleague in the Dominion might pass through the Dominion Office, and when that happened the Official Secretary to the Governor-General received them. But others passed direct from Prime Minister to Prime Minister, and the Governor-General's office has no record of these except through the courtesy of the Prime Minister.

The principle of responsible government runs a steel rod through all British institutions, a Government is responsible to the people for everything done in the name of the King, and the people elect the Parliament from amongst the members of which a Government is chosen. And in all relations between different parts of the Empire *inter se*, and between the Empire as an entity—or any part of it—and foreign countries, British Ministers are the advisers of the King. Upon their advice he acts, and upon theirs alone. And unless we can devise means whereby the various Governments of the British Commonwealth can act unitedly, either through greatly improved means of communication or by agreeing—which is most unlikely—to delegate to representatives in London the power to decide questions which affect inter-Empire and foreign relations, the present practice must continue. For the King cannot serve many masters or follow conflicting advice.

The King of Great Britain is King of Canada and of the Commonwealth of Australia, and of all the Dominions

beyond the seas. The members of these Governments are His Majesty's Ministers, and in their domestic affairs their advice tendered to the King's representative, the Governor-General, is accepted in exactly the same way, and for all practical purposes to the same extent, as His Majesty accepts the advice of his Ministers in London. But the relations between His Majesty's Ministers in London and the Crown differ, in some important respects, from the relations between the Dominion Governments and the Crown.

The King is the creation of a British statute. The British people alone contribute to his support. They and they alone maintain the armed forces upon which the Crown and, of course, Britain and the Empire rest. From all this it follows that the recommendation of the Inter-Empire Relations Committee cannot effect any real change in the status of the Governor-General. Declaring him to be no longer the representative of the British Government is only juggling with words. He always was the representative of the Crown. He always held his commission from the King. He continues to be the representative of the King and to be appointed by him, but, since the King can act only as and when advised, it is the British Government which actually appoints him, and it is to the British Government his reports go (even though they may be addressed to the King), and upon the British Government's instructions he must act.

THE "FONS ET ORIGO" OF THE REPORT

And this brings us to the *fons et origo* of this section of the Committee's report. Beneath the pall of smoke there is a little fire, and this fire is a beacon lit formally to register Mr. Mackenzie's victory over Lord Byng. In 1926 Mr. Mackenzie King, then Prime Minister of Canada, finding the position of his Government in the Canadian House of Commons untenable, advised the Governor-General to grant a dissolution. But this His

Excellency refused, holding, as he was entitled to do, that the possibilities of the Parliament were not exhausted, and that another Ministry could be formed which could secure sufficient support to carry on the King's Government. Whereupon Mr. Mackenzie King tendered his resignation, he and his colleagues retired from office, and His Excellency gave Mr. Arthur Meighen (formerly Prime Minister) a commission to form a Government. This Mr. Meighen did, and his Ministry met the House, but after a little while, finding it impossible to carry on, he sought for a dissolution, and this being granted, went to the country. He was soundly beaten by Mr. Mackenzie King, who, very naturally annoyed at the treatment he had received from Lord Byng, made the supremacy of the Canadian Government in domestic affairs his battle-cry.

It was most effective, appealing as it did to the patriotism of the Canadian people. Mr. Meighen might quote precedent to justify the Governor-General's action, but this counted for very little in a community grown accustomed to sweep precedents contemptuously aside when they stood in the way of its interests. Anyway, there was much logic in Mr. Mackenzie King's attitude. If, as Britain had declared so often, Canada was a self-governing community, if the whole world had recognised her as a nation and admitted her to the League of Nations, where she sat as an equal of Britain, then she had the rights of a nation, and was entitled to govern herself in exactly the same way as Britain. If the King in person invariably accepted the advice of his Ministers and granted a dissolution whenever they asked for it, then surely the Governor-General, the representative of the King, must accept the advice of his Ministers. Anyway, logic or no logic, Mr. Mackenzie King's appeal to the people in 1926 was a glorious victory, and flushed with success he went to London and demanded a triumph.

As concessions, more or less real, were the order of the day, the complaisant British Government did not

object—so it would appear that in future, when a Dominion Government recommends a dissolution, the Governor-General must grant it as a matter of course. This is no doubt so compatible with democratic government as it is understood and practised in Britain, and with the status of the Dominions, that no one can take exception to it. But its effect upon inter-Empire relations is almost negligible. On the other hand, the right to nominate and, in effect, to choose the Governor-General, which Britain granted in 1919, affects these in a very material way.

PROCEDURE IN TREATIES

Upon the procedure in the making of treaties the Committee dwells at length with much attention to detail, but as it carefully abstains from saying anything new, I need offer no comment. But the question is of great importance, and we refer to it in a later chapter.¹

APPEALS TO JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF PRIVY COUNCIL

Upon appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council the Committee delivers itself of the weighty comment that "as a result of long and careful discussion it had become clear that it was no part of the policy of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain that questions affecting judicial appeals should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the wishes of the part of the Empire primarily affected. It was, however, generally recognised that where changes in the existing system were proposed, which, while primarily affecting one part, raised issues in which other parts were concerned, such changes ought also to be carried out after consultation and discussion. So far as the work of the Committee is concerned, this general understanding expressed all that was required. The question of some immediate change in the present conditions governing appeals from

¹ "Dominion Ambassadors," Chapter XII.

the Irish Free State was not pressed in relation to the present Conference, though it was made clear that the right was reserved to bring up the matter again at the next Imperial Conference for discussion in relation to the facts of this particular case."

OPERATIONS OF DOMINION LEGISLATION

The Committee then proceeds to consider "various points" in the operations of Dominion legislation which require classification. The particular points involved were :

"(a) Present practice, under which Acts of Dominion Parliaments are sent each year to London, and it is intimated through the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs that 'His Majesty will not be advised to exercise his powers of disallowance with regard to them.'

"(b) Reservation of Dominion legislation in certain circumstances for signification of His Majesty's pleasure, which was signified on advice tendered by His Majesty's Government in Great Britain.

"(c) Difference between legislative competence of the Parliament of Westminster and the Dominion Parliaments in that Acts passed by the latter operate as a general rule only within the territorial area of the Dominion concerned.

"(d) Operation of legislation passed by the Parliament at Westminster in relation to the Dominions. In this connection special attention is called to such statutes as the Colonial Laws Validity Act. It was suggested that in future uniformity of legislation as between Great Britain and the Dominions could best be secured by the enactment of reciprocal statutes based upon consultation and agreement. We gave these matters the best consideration possible, but came to the conclusion that the issues involved were so complex that there would be grave danger in attempting any immediate pronouncement other than a statement of certain principles which underlie the whole question of the operation of Dominion

legislation. We felt that for the rest it would be necessary to obtain expert guidance as a preliminary to further consideration by His Majesty's Government in Great Britain and the Dominions. On the questions raised with regard to the disallowance and reservation of Dominion legislation, it was explained by the Irish Free State representatives that they desired to elucidate constitutional practice in relation to Canada, as it was provided by Article 2 of the Articles of Agreement for a Treaty of 1921 that the position of the Irish Free State in relation to the Imperial Parliament and Government and otherwise shall be that of the Dominion of Canada."

On this point the Committee goes on to say :

"We propose that it should be placed on record that apart from the provisions embodied in Constitutions or in specific Statutes expressly providing for reservation, it is recognised that it is the right of the Government of each Dominion to advise the Crown in all matters relating to its own affairs. Consequently it would not be in accordance with constitutional practice for advice to be tendered to His Majesty's Government in Great Britain in any matter appertaining to the affairs of a Dominion against the views of the Government of that Dominion. Appropriate procedure with regard to projected legislation in one of the self-governing parts is previous consultation between His Majesty's Ministers in the several parts concerned. With regard to the legislative competence of members of the British Commonwealth of Nations other than Great Britain, and in particular to the desirability of those members being enabled to legislate with extra-territorial effect, we think it should similarly be placed on record that the constitutional practice is that legislation by the Parliament at Westminster applying to a Dominion should only be passed with the consent of the Dominion concerned."

Hear ! Hear ! But why this studied reticence ? Why does the Committee not tell us without beating about the bush that Queen Anne is dead ?

MERCHANT SHIPPING LEGISLATION

“Similar considerations to those set out above,” the Report proceeds, “governed our attitude towards a similar question raised in relation to merchant shipping legislation. It was pointed out that while uniformity of administrative practice was desirable, and indeed essential, as regards the merchant shipping legislation of the various parts of the Empire, it was difficult to reconcile the application in its present form of certain provisions of the principal statutes relating to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, more particularly Clauses 735 and 730, with the constitutional status of the several members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. We felt that although in the evolution of the British Empire certain inequalities had been allowed to remain as regards various questions of maritime affairs, it is essential in dealing with these inequalities to consider the practical aspect of the matter. The difficulties in the way of introducing any immediate alterations in the Merchant Shipping Code were fully appreciated, and it is felt to be necessary in any review of the position to take into account such matters of general concern as the qualifications for registry as a British ship, the status of British ships in war, work done by His Majesty’s Consuls in the interests of British shipping and seamen, and the question of naval Courts at foreign ports to deal with crimes and offence on British ships abroad.”

And having led us into the very heart of this Saragossa Sea, the Committee ingenuously disclaims any more responsibility, and solemnly declares that “we have come *finally*”—we are constrained to admit that there is about this word a touch of artistry which is almost irresistible—“to the conclusion that, following the precedent which had been found useful on previous occasions, the general question of merchant shipping legislation had best be remitted to a special sub-conference which could meet most appropriately at the same time as the Expert Committee to which reference is made above.

“To consider and report on the principles which should govern in the general interest the practice and the legislation relating to Merchant Shipping in the various parts of the Empire, having regard to the change in the constitutional status and the general relations which has occurred since the existing laws were enacted.”

Quite! He marched his army up the hill, and then he marched them down again.

And this is characteristic of the Report. Upon generalities or questions that involve no difficulties the Report becomes embarrassingly expansive and oracular. But where it comes upon any real difficulties, it mumbles almost apologetically and hurries by on the other side, leaving the matter to be dealt with by a committee about which we know no more than that it has not yet been appointed.

This palpable evasion of the problem ought to please intensely those responsible for the first Committee. It was, doubtless, just what they hoped for. But these points ought never to have been referred to the Inter-Empire Relations Committee. The cure for all these troubles, which are the inevitable consequences of development and progress, lies in action by Britain. The Dominions can do nothing; the Committee can do nothing; the remedy is in the hands of the British Parliament.

The reference of Dominion legislation to the Dominion Office, the reservation of certain classes of legislation for the approval of the British Government, the hamstringing of Dominion legislation by restricting their power to territorial limits in matters where their interests demand that the laws shall have force outside those limits, and the operation of the Colonial Laws Validity Act¹—a statute

¹ The Privy Council in 1926 declared invalid a provision in a Canadian statute, Article 1025 of the Criminal Code, which prohibited appeals in criminal matters. The Minister, Mr. Lapointe, pointed out that the Canadian people and the Canadian National Legislature had approved the prohibition, but although Britain recognised Canada as her equal, a British statute sixty years old had overridden the will of the Canadian people.

passed over sixty years ago, when the Dominions were small outposts of the Empire—all these, I say, are incompatible with the status and importance of the Dominions, and ought to be swept away by an Act of the British Parliament. This Act should repeal all provisions in any British statute which limit the powers or are inconsistent with the status of the Dominions and their right to make whatever laws they deem necessary. And no legislation should be reserved for the Royal assent. For, as we have seen, the King's assent can only be given upon the advice of his Ministers in London. In other words, to reserve legislation for the Royal assent is to submit Dominion laws for approval to the British Government. Any such admission of inferiority is clearly inconsistent with that equality of status which, the Report reminds us, is now the mark of all the nations in the British Commonwealth.

LIKE LITTLE WANTON BOYS THAT SWIM ON BLADDERS

And now we turn to another of the incidental effects of this well-meant but most ill-advised effort to define more clearly the relations between the various parts of a living and rapidly growing organism. Each of the nations of the Empire—equal in status, though not perhaps in stature—enjoys full control over its own affairs. This right of self-government is plenary; it is conditional. If there are some things members of the Empire do not do which they might do if they were outside the Empire, it is not because they lack the right, but because they choose to act in that way. For above all things it is clear that in the British Commonwealth no one member may exercise an overlordship over all or any of the others. This fact is fundamental. The report emphasises it, but the position existed long before the 1926 Declaration. Overlordship by Britain is inconsistent with that equality of status which has been recognised and publicly declared since the war.

The equality of status, of unlimited power of self-government, is, of course, elementary, and need not have

been so strongly emphasised except for the rather startling consequences that arise out of it. The Dominions, although equal in status to Britain and as completely outside the ambit of the British Legislature as is Britain outside the Legislature of the Dominions, have all been created by British statutes. An Act passed by the British Parliament lays the legal foundation of each. This applies to individual States and to the Federations or Unions of which they have become members. These British statutes are known as the Constitutions of the various States or Dominions to which they apply. They are at once the charter of liberty of the State or Dominion and its guardian. They set out what may or may not be done. Generally, they do not limit the self-governing powers of the people, but they do limit the authority of the Legislatures. Certain classes of legislation cannot become law unless and until the people have been consulted and approved them. The British statute usually gives legal effect to agreements necessary for federations between, or unions of, several States—that is, it allocates to the Federal or central Government or to those of the States certain enumerated powers, and reserves all others to the contracting States. Alternatively, the enumerated powers are allocated to the States, and the residuum of authority granted to the States under their respective Constitutions passes to the central Government. And this division of powers neither the central nor any of the State Legislatures, nor even the people themselves, can alter except in the manner prescribed by the British statute.

Whether it is strictly compatible with the principles of democracy that a written instrument, made perhaps by men long since dead to meet the needs of an age that has passed away, should prevent a people from doing what they believe necessary for their welfare is a question upon which opinions may well differ. But one thing is certain, the new realignment of the Governments of the British Empire has created a position without parallel and quite unstable.

CANADA'S SITUATION

Take the position in which Canada, for example, finds herself to-day. The Dominion has debated it at length inside and outside Parliament. The British North America Act, 1867, creating the Dominion of Canada, united under one Federal Government the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, and subsequently Manitoba, the North-west Territory, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island. It united not merely two different provinces, but two distinct races—the British and French Canadians. The Act effected an agreement arrived at after many years of negotiation between the British and French Canadians, and in a lesser degree between the other Colonies. This was in effect a treaty which safeguarded the interests of all parties. It could not be altered except by general consent, and then only by the British Parliament, which would of course not legislate unless all the parties to the pact so desired. This element of finality, without which the parties would never have federated, has been of incalculable value in maintaining the stability of the Dominion during the sixty years of its existence. The instrument of union was outside party conflict. It was the one solid, immovable fact in a land often shaken with political and racial turmoil. The weak sheltered securely beneath it, the strong regarded it as Holy Writ.

For all practical purposes this Constitution was unalterable without general consent. No matter how powerful a province or group of provinces might become, the British Parliament alone could blot out a line of it—and only when all the parties asked. But where there was certainty, there is now doubt, and many of those who most loudly demanded that the autonomous powers of Canada should be more definitely declared are now going about in chastened mood deploring the inevitable consequence of the granting of their prayers.

The position is this. If Canada is a nation equal in status to Britain, nothing that concerns Canada can be

outside the ambit of the Canadian Legislature and the Canadian people. When the British North America Act was passed, everyone accepted the overlordship of Britain, and, wishing to safeguard their interests under a confederated system of government, the provinces naturally turned to Britain. In no other way could the Union have been achieved, and there was certainly no other authority with power to give legal effect to the pact.

But in sixty years the whole basis of the Empire has changed. Britain, which was then the sun in a firmament of feeble lights revolving slowly and erratically around her, has voluntarily abdicated her supremacy, and is content to be *primus inter pares*. We have insisted upon being recognised as nations, and we have been so recognised, not only by Britain, but by the world at large.

But we cannot have it both ways. If Canada is a nation, in fact as well as by courtesy, if she has the full power of self-government that is the attribute of a nation, then she should have the power to legislate upon anything necessary or incidental to the welfare and good government of the Dominion.

Suppose, for example, that the Canadian Parliament decided to amend the British North America Act, or to legislate in some way inconsistent with that statute? Would the laws she passed be what is termed constitutional—that is to say, within the legislative ambit of the Canadian Parliament?

MR. LAPOINTE'S BAFFLING ELOQUENCE

This point was specially raised when the Canadian House of Commons discussed the Inter-Empire Relations Committee's Report in 1926. No one seemed able to settle it. To judge from the speeches of some honourable gentlemen, anxious not to be too definite, the position was very delicate. For if they said that Canada, a nation, was yet not master in its own house,

they were likely to kindle an inextinguishable fire. On the other hand, if they spoke out boldly, declaring that Canada was master in its own house and could amend its Constitution, they were likely to be swept away by the flood of furious protests that would pour in upon them. In the circumstances they could hardly be censured for walking warily. The speech of Mr. Lapointe, Minister for Justice, is a very model for what was proper in the circumstances.

"Many people claim," declared the Minister, "that because we cannot in this Parliament alter our own Constitution, that is a state of subordination. I claim that so long as this condition exists because of the will of the Canadian people—a condition which will exist so long as the Canadian people wish it so to do—changes that could be made will have to be made by the parties to the contract. But that condition, which is dependent on our own wish in the matter, does not, I claim, create a state of subordination. I deny most emphatically that a state of subordination and colonial inferiority is essential to the preservation of the rights of minorities in Canada."

Then Mr. Lapointe, perhaps fearing that he had not been sufficiently ambiguous, or that, despite his every effort to walk in the middle of the road, he had strayed a little more to one side than the other, declared that he entirely agreed with his honourable friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) that their own protection so far as these rights were concerned (that is, the rights of the provinces under the Constitution) depended upon themselves.

"We must," said Mr. Lapointe, "look to ourselves for the safeguarding of our rights and our interests—it would not be possible to secure the permanent adhesion of any section of the Canadian people to any plan, whereby there would be any political force superior to their own Government and their own Constitution, which could even indirectly have authority to control their actions."

This masterly statement of the situation ought to have satisfied everybody, but for Mr. Manion it was not enough. He wanted to know what the Minister meant. "Would the Minister be perfectly satisfied to see the Parliament of Canada change its Constitution as it controlled legislation upon internal affairs without submitting the matter to the Privy Council of England?" Mr. Lapointe replied that "No change in the British North America Act could be made without the consent of the parties to the pact."

If those dazzled by the glare of Mr. Lapointe's verbal headlights asked us to interpret his meaning, we would state the position thus: "Canada is a nation. The ambit of the powers of the national Legislature in Canada is at present defined and limited by the British North America Act. As long as the people of Canada are satisfied to allow that Act to operate, it will have the force of law in Canada—but no longer. There is no reason whatever to believe that the people of Canada want to exercise their rights as a fully self-governing country to amend its constitution. On the contrary, there is considerable alarm at the discovery that such a thing is possible. But there is no doubt whatever that if ever the Canadian people take it into their heads to amend, repeal, or ignore the British North America Act, they will be able to do what they want."

As to the legislative competence of the Canadian Legislature to act as the guardian of its own Constitution and to amend or repeal the British North America Act, one may say a word or two. Some may perhaps contend that a resolution of the Imperial Conference does not confer upon Canada the right to repeal a British statute. That may be so. In themselves, conference resolutions are without legal sanction. But that is not to say they mean nothing. If those resolutions leave things where they were, of what use are they?

If the relations between Britain and the Dominions

are the same now as they were before the war—and certainly no legislation passed by the British Parliament has altered them—then all statements that the Dominions are equal in status to Britain and have the same right as Britain to legislate in matters that affect themselves are so much hot air. If only an Act of the British Parliament can alter the inter-Empire relations, most people will say that the Parliament should pass immediately whatever legislation is necessary to give effect to the numerous declarations of conferences and British statesmen. But we do not agree that resolutions declaring and defining inter-Empire relations passed at conferences at which the Prime Ministers of Britain and of all the self-governing Dominions and the representatives of India were present count for nothing. On the contrary, we hold that they are agreements which have the binding effect of treaties made with the concurrence of all parties competent and having authority to negotiate the matters covered by the resolutions.

Upon the legal effect of these resolutions or declarations made by the Prime Minister of Great Britain on behalf of the Conference it is hard to speak with certainty. For a resolution couched in general terms may go very far and have consequences which those who agreed to it did not desire. When, for example, the Prime Ministers of Britain and of the Dominions affirmed in 1917, and more emphatically in 1918, the Dominions' equality of status with Britain, and when they re-affirmed this on many subsequent occasions, they did not intend to weaken the validity or interfere in any way with the British statutes which are the legal foundations of their separate existence. They had not anticipated that one of the effects of the resolutions declaring and defining the new relations between the different parts of the Empire would be to undermine the very ground upon which they stood. They did not intend that it should do this. And but for this most unfortunate Report of the Inter-Empire Relations Committee, the point would not have arisen—at all events not for

a long time—and we should have been content that our status was equal to Britain's, that we were nations recognised by the League, and have let it go at that without probing beneath the surface of the broad principle of equality, or to apply it in every direction, as the mood or the exigencies of party politics suggested.

CHAPTER IX

EGYPT

PRACTICAL difficulties, as I have endeavoured to show, often prevent Britain from referring to the Dominions urgent affairs of foreign policy, but frequently when it might have invited their opinions the British Government has acted upon its own initiative and merely informed the Dominions that it has decided to do this or that, leaving them no practical alternative but to accept the situation.

There is, for example, neither peace nor finality about the trouble in Egypt. I have mentioned it briefly, showing the extraordinary way in which the Empire was committed without being consulted, or even notified, to a revolutionary change of policy in Egypt; but subsequent events—the intervening years of unrest, the present¹ crisis caused by the rejection of the draft treaty, and the ultimatum which Britain delivered shortly afterwards demanding the withdrawal of the Assemblies Bill—demonstrate so clearly how important to the Dominions is an effective share in controlling foreign policy that a more detailed review of Egyptian affairs since 1916 seems very necessary. The story is absorbing, but it is calculated to give faithful believers in the greatness of the Empire and the wisdom of its statesmen a rude shock.

AN HISTORICAL REVIEW

It is now some fifty years since Britain went into Egypt to suppress the Arabi rebellion and found itself com-

¹ May 1928.

mitted to a *de facto* occupation of the country. But although Britain was in Egypt, the people enjoyed a very considerable measure of self-government, and British influence, advice, and co-operation vastly improved the condition of the masses. During the quarter of a century from 1888 to 1914, the year of the outbreak of war, Egypt was a more or less autonomous nation under the suzerainty of Turkey, ruled by a Khedive and a Council of Ministers, with an Egyptian Legislative Assembly in the background. The British Government was represented by an official whose nominal status was not higher than that of the representatives of other Powers stationed at Cairo. But gradually the situation changed. The presence of the British Army of Occupation necessary to preserve order and the security of the country, Britain's obligation to recover the Sudan, the existence of very widespread and powerful interests in the country, and, lastly, the personality of Lord Cromer, the British representative—a man of remarkable administrative gifts, and with the genius for ruling an Oriental country—all these combined to increase the authority of Britain, so that, up to the time of Lord Cromer's death, the outside world regarded Egypt almost as a British possession. Certainly it was a country in which the British point of view and British interests were ascendant. But after Lord Cromer's death, owing partly to the calibre of those who succeeded him, the authority of Britain declined and our position became less satisfactory.

When in the autumn of 1914 Britain found herself at war with Turkey, she had to regularise her position in Egypt, because the country was nominally subject to the Sultan, and in December 1914 the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi, who had openly associated himself with our enemies, was deposed, and one of his uncles, Prince Hussein Kamil, was put upon the throne with the title of Sultan.

THE PROTECTORATE

In the proclamation which declared the status, we laid down that Egypt was placed under the protection of His

Majesty, and would therefore constitute a British Protectorate. Britain is so used to protectorates in a hundred different parts of the world that the British Government did not bother to explain what sort of a Protectorate it was setting up in Egypt. The word itself can have an invidious connotation: in one extreme it is hardly distinguishable from sovereignty, but in the other it may mean a gentle and necessary supervision of the internal and external affairs of a country. As Britain did not tell the Egyptians exactly what she meant, they not unnaturally assumed that this protectorate was for the purposes of the war only, and that when the war was over we would revert to the *status quo*, and that some change in the position of Egypt favourable to the aspirations of the natives might be expected.

Quite rightly Britain declared that she did not expect Egypt to take her part on the fighting front, but that the British Government would be responsible for the defence and protection of her frontiers. But although she was not asked to contribute soldiers, she was asked, and with very profitable results to herself, to make an indirect contribution to the war.

In 1917, unfortunately, the Sultan Hussein died, and in 1918 his brother succeeded him. With the termination of the war a new cause of political discontent arose. I have spoken strongly of President Wilson's Fourteen Points in another chapter. The evil for which they are responsible can hardly be measured. Those Fourteen Points and the ideals for which President Wilson stood had a profound effect in all Oriental countries, particularly the article enunciating the right of all peoples on earth to "self-determination."

The remote causes of Egypt's disturbance are probably to be found in the spread of Western ideas, Western education, and Western concepts of government amongst people steeped for ages in the self-abnegation of the Orient. But the immediate causes were the war, President Wilson's Fourteen Points, the weakness and lack of tact of the British representatives in Egypt, and the

indiscretions and blunders of certain members of the British Government. Had there been no world-war, the leaven of Western civilisation would have worked less rapidly and more evenly upon the body-politic, which would have been better able to adjust itself to the alien order of things. But the war was a hothouse in which ideas, some great, some foolish, some quite mad, were incubated and let loose in all their fascinating immaturity upon a credulous and unbalanced world.

The war, which brought misery and death to other nations, came to Egypt bearing gifts in both its bloody hands. A succession of high Niles and immense opportunities for making money out of our armies suddenly presented themselves to the Egyptian people. But the Egyptian Nationalists believed that the Central Powers must win the war, and that through the gates of victory Freedom would come to Egypt sitting peacefully in the sun. The fall of Kut strengthened that conviction. Meantime they contrived to lose no opportunity to spoil the British.

But when the Egyptians, who trace their history back thousands of years and regard themselves as in the very vanguard of civilisation, found the tide turning, the Turks beaten and scattered, and the Central Powers collapsing, and heard that the Arabs and other peoples even less notable had been promised independence and were preparing to establish themselves as sovereign States, the more restless spirits felt that inaction would be a badge of servitude. They resolved that Egypt too should be free.

Circumstance fanned the flame of their purpose. The European nations had been fighting desperately to make the world safe for democracy; President Wilson's ideal of "self-determination" pointed the way they should go.

Whatever doubts they may have had of the wisdom and expedience of taking fortune at the flood were resolved by a timely and most helpful note from Lord Robert Cecil issued at the time of the Armistice by—or in the names of—the British and French Governments—mainly

for Syria and Mesopotamia—which asserted in admirably clear language that British policy was the enfranchisement of the various peoples our arms had liberated from the yoke of the Turks, and the institution in those areas of forms of national government.

ZAGHLUL PASHA

The effect of this note, attuned to the same lofty key as President Wilson's famous manifesto, upon the impressionable minds of the leaders of Egyptian Nationalism was explosive. Zaghlul Pasha, a man of limitless ambition, unscrupulous, but very able, who had been a Minister in one of the Egyptian Ministries, began to organise the Nationalist Party. In Cairo, Alexandria, and all the principal cities of Egypt the populace hailed the new movement with tumultuous enthusiasm. Zaghlul became the national hero.

About this time the Prime Minister—Rushdi Pasha—and one of his colleagues were immersed in the wider affairs of the Peace Conference, at which they desired that Egypt should be directly represented; but they were informed that the British Government would be glad to confer with them at a later date upon the situation. The two Egyptian Ministers then suggested that they should be invited to come to England, and that Zaghlul and his friends should come with them and be received too. This suggestion the British Government declined, saying that it would be very glad to see the Ministers, but could not receive a man whose views upon matters in Egypt were so utterly inconsistent with those held by His Majesty's Government.

THE RISING IN EGYPT

Thereupon Zaghlul Pasha and his men raised the flag of revolt, and in March 1919, upon the advice of the British representative, Zaghlul and his friends were removed to Malta. Then ensued the rising in Egypt upon a scale almost unparalleled in ferocity, accompanied

by looting, pillage, and murder, in fact, an open revolt. All classes—Christians and Moslems alike—supported it, and, for the first time in recent history, the Coptic community.

Time passed. Things were quietening down—were certainly not getting any worse—when Britain appointed Lord Allenby, fresh from his triumphs in the East, to take charge of Egyptian affairs. His first act was to recall Zaghlul and his friends from exile. If it was a mistake to make martyrs of the leaders of the Nationalists, to recall them in response to clamorous demands, to murder, to outrage, was worse than a mistake. The effect upon the situation in Egypt was deplorable. The cunning intriguers who inspired and directed the Nationalist campaign from safe vantage-grounds accepted Zaghlul's recall as convincing proof that the most effective and indeed the only means to secure concessions from Britain was through violence. After a respite they rose again, and in 1921 rioting became general. The campaign of isolated murders developed into wholesale massacres. Armenians were killed in batches; British soldiers were murdered with impunity in open daylight and their bodies defiled by unspeakable atrocities. Foreign residents, whose interests Britain was bound by treaty to protect, were jeopardised. The feebleness of the British representatives made these things possible. A firm policy would have saved the situation. They could have arrested the leaders, they could have restored and maintained order, but they halted between two minds.

II

A WEAK ADMINISTRATION

What the Egyptians wanted above everything else was someone to govern them justly, but firmly. But instead of governing Egypt, maintaining order, compelling respect for and obedience to the law—which is the essence of government—a weak and hesitant administration encouraged disorder and contempt for the law. The

British representatives seemed to be more concerned with attempts to conciliate those who regarded every concession as a sign of weakness than with the steady prosecution of a just and progressive policy. Instead of leading the people along a road by which they would, in time, have reached the fullest self-government of which they were capable, and at the same time safeguarding the vital interests of Britain and the Empire, they pursued a policy of vacillation, posturing before the gallery of the world and leading the Egyptian people to conjure up visions the British representatives must have known could never be realised.

What the situation demanded was a plain, definite statement of British policy, setting out Britain's intention to terminate the Protectorate, to help the Egyptian people to control their own domestic affairs, but setting out, too, those limitations upon Egypt's self-governing powers which her circumstances and the interests of the Empire and foreign nations imposed.

Such a declaration would have cleared the air. The people of Egypt would have known where they were, what was possible and what impossible. As it was, everyone drifted. Since no one knew how far the British Government would permit the Nationalists to go, people were encouraged to believe that full control of foreign policy and the complete evacuation of Egypt by the British—which the extremists demanded—were within the range of practical politics.

In the early part of 1921 the state of affairs in Egypt had been unsettled for nearly three years. In all this the Dominions—Australia and New Zealand particularly—were vitally concerned. But although she had ample opportunity, Britain did not attempt to ascertain their views, and left them to gather what information they could from the press. There appeared, early in 1921, a short cable stating that, in answer to a question in the House of Lords, the Foreign Secretary had made an announcement which, although muted by official reticence, was sufficiently alarming.

The question referred to a report by Lord Milner, which, it was suggested, the Government intended to adopt. By adopting this report—according to the press cable—the British Government would be committed to a treaty which conceded to Egypt complete independence, control over her own foreign policy, and provided for the withdrawal of British troops from Egyptian territory, with the exception of a narrow strip along the Canal Zone.

THE MILNER REPORT

The Commonwealth Government knew nothing of the Milner Report, or indeed of his mission, had no intimation that the representatives of Britain and Egypt were negotiating, or that Britain thought of changing the situation.

Greatly disturbed, the Commonwealth Government telegraphed for information, protesting most strongly against anything which would threaten the lines of communication between Britain and Australia. As the reply was vague and unsatisfactory, the Commonwealth Government urged that a meeting of the Imperial Conference should be summoned to deal with the question. To this the British Government agreed, and in June 1921 the representatives of Britain and the Dominions met in London.

In a most illuminating discussion upon Egypt we learned that the British Government had been committed without its knowledge by the declaration of Lord Robert Cecil in the first place, and by the premature publication of Lord Milner's tentative agreement with Zaghlul, to a policy inconsistent with the interests of Britain and menacing the interests of the Empire generally. And it seemed that neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Secretary knew any more than the Dominions of the various steps that had led up to the negotiations.

We were told that in 1920 Britain had sent to Egypt at the head of a special mission Lord Milner, at that

time Secretary for the Colonies, a man of many years' experience of Egypt, who had made his early reputation by his work there. Although none of the prominent Egyptians were allowed officially to see them, the members of the mission went about the country making inquiries, and collected an immense amount of valuable information on which they arrived at a general précis embodied in a kind of preliminary report. Lord Milner did not meet Zaghlul himself during his sojourn in Egypt; accordingly he invited Zaghlul and his friends in an unofficial but not a private capacity to come over and see him in London, and by the summer of August 1920 they had reached certain tentative conclusions between them. Lord Milner—so the Dominion Prime Ministers were informed—had undertaken these conversations on his own responsibility and in private, and the Foreign Secretary had been a good deal surprised when he saw the conclusions in the form they ultimately assumed. However, in the month of August, Zaghlul, taking advantage of the opportunity, caused the agreement to be published in the press without authority; the matter having been made public, the Government had to take cognisance of it.

THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

Broadly speaking, the tentative agreement provided that there should be a Constitution resting upon a treaty between Britain and Egypt, under which Britain would recognise the independence of Egypt as a constitutional monarchy having full control over its foreign affairs and the right of representation in foreign countries. Whilst providing for the maintenance of British forces in Egypt, it was agreed that they should be located not in any of the capital cities, but in the Canal Zone.

To set out the question as it was then, I cannot do better than to quote from some of the observations I made at the time.

“A statement which appeared in the press to the

effect that it was proposed to adopt Lord Milner's Report was the first intimation that the Government of Australia had of this radical change of policy," I said. "I presume that the world at large learned of it at the same time. It is true that 'nothing has been decided yet,' but after hearing the statement of the Foreign Secretary and perusing the reports by experts on the position it seemed clear that though the British Government had made no formal decision, the situation had developed to such a point that the Government was committed, and nothing remained for the representatives of the Empire but to register their formal acquiescence.

"So that while it was true that in a narrow and technical sense nothing had been decided, yet we found ourselves without a practical alternative, and had to reluctantly acquiesce in a course of action which will lead us we know not where, but which is assuredly full of menace. A position of vital importance has been abandoned, not as a result of long and careful deliberation, not from conviction that what was proposed was right and in the best interests of all parties concerned—the Egyptian people, the Empire, and the world at large—but because by blunders and treachery we have been led into an *impasse*.

"Egypt is the gateway to the East: the safety of the Canal is vital to the safety of Australia. Will anyone suggest that these proposals do not threaten the safety of the Canal? We shall still have a military force there, but can it be denied that with a hostile Egypt—and it is not claimed that by these or any other proposals we shall satisfy the extremists—the British forces in Egypt will not in times of emergency find themselves between two fires?

"Reference has been made to the discussion which took place with the Egyptian delegates in 1918. . . . I have no recollection of this question being discussed or even mentioned at any meeting of the Imperial Cabinet. . . . Similarly, in Paris, there was nothing made known

to us except the fact that the Egyptian delegates were there. Nor were we even given a hint about Lord Cecil's note to Lord Allenby, which, as it were, closed the door to any attempt to get out by the same way as we went in."

Here the Prime Minister (Mr. Lloyd George) observed that he thought it right to say that what had been done had been done without his knowledge. He said that Mr. Balfour (now Lord Balfour) was then Foreign Secretary, and that he and the Prime Minister were in Paris at the time, but knew nothing at all about it. Further, that M. Clemenceau and the French Foreign Office were unaware of the situation, and that in a conversation M. Clemenceau said he was certain that nothing of the kind had been done, and that Lord Robert Cecil had acted without consulting anybody.

I went on to say :

"It was undeniable that a very serious position had been created which concerned us all. Anything which menaces the Canal and British prestige in Egypt or in any of those territories which are, as it were, the hinterland of the Canal, affects the whole of the Empire vitally. Now we are asked what we are going to do. First of all, I want to say how much I regret what has been done, and to express the hope that we shall learn wisdom from what has happened, and devise some means to prevent its recurrence, which might lead to still more disastrous consequences. It has been stated in definite terms by the Foreign Secretary that even if we grant all that Lord Milner recommended, it would still leave us in opposition to Zaghul, and we should have opposed to us all those varied elements that make up, so we are told, ninety per cent. of the population.

"So then, here is a remedy, which, while disastrous to us, is going to be unacceptable to the great bulk of the Egyptian people. Having made a concession which is the utmost we can make, which we ought never to have dreamed of making, and which, if made, will imperil Australia and the whole Empire, we are asked to approve

it with the full knowledge—or at least with every prospect that it will be—unacceptable to the great bulk of the Egyptian people. Having made it, we can never recede from it. We shall always have to give a little more and a little more in order that we may placate the implacable. How can we safeguard our interests? What guarantee is it proposed to exact in regard to our interests in Egypt that can be satisfactory? Speaking as a civilian, I think it impossible to hold the Canal if we are confined solely to the Canal Zone with the hinterland held by a people bitterly hostile. . . . Nothing we can do will placate Zaghlul. . . . No one will contend for a moment that we shall be, if we concede what is demanded, . . . in as good a position to hold the Canal—which must be held at all hazards—as at present. It is said that guarantees are to be furnished; that our interests will be safeguarded. But what guarantees can they give that we dare accept? . . . Suppose we give the Egyptians all they ask for, . . . will that satisfy them? And if it does, will it satisfy the world? . . . Can Egypt stand alone? Do you believe for a moment that she can, or will be permitted to do so? . . . What will happen if we relinquish our position at this gateway to our Empire? Will that be the end? . . . Will not other nations seek to take our place?

“The Prime Ministers from the Dominions are asked to give advice in a case where the time is long past when advice could be usefully tendered. We are brought to a case *in articulo mortis* and asked to perform a miracle.”

And to this conclusion the members of the Imperial Conference, after long discussion, were reluctantly driven. Britain had been hopelessly compromised by what had been said and done in her name. While it was true that the Government had been completely ignorant of Lord Robert Cecil's declaration, and was in no way responsible for the tentative treaty agreed upon by Zaghlul and Lord Milner and prematurely published in the press by Zaghlul, the fact remained that the Government had not repudiated either the treaty or

the note, and by its silence and inaction it had encouraged the Egyptians to believe that these documents represented the policy of Britain. And, unhappily, the vacillating policy of the British representative in Egypt, the exile and recall of Zaghlul and his friends, all fitted this view.

In the circumstances the only course was to make the best of a bad job. The Imperial Conference, having laid down in clear and definite terms the limits beyond which concessions could not go, left the Foreign Secretary to negotiate the terms of settlement with Zaghlul. The 1922 Constitution represents the outcome of his difficult and thankless task.

Shortly stated, the Constitution gave Egypt a King and a Parliament whose legislative ambit covered the entire sphere of domestic affairs, Britain continuing her control over foreign policy and maintaining her Army of Occupation for the protection of foreign residents, the Suez Canal, and the Sudan.

Four points were reserved :

1. The Canal and its security.
2. The defence of Egypt against foreign aggression or foreign interference.
3. The protection of foreign interests and the protection of minorities.
4. The Sudan.

III

INSATIABLE NATIONALITY

Events have turned out as we might have expected, as indeed the delegates to the 1921 Conference insisted they would turn out. The extensive privileges of self-government granted to Egypt, so far from satisfying the Nationalists, have merely stimulated them to demand more concessions.

Interpreting the concessions as a sign of weakness, and a direct result of the rising in the earlier part of that year when many lives were lost, the extremists determined to bring Britain to her knees by an intensive cam-

paing of riot and murder. They assassinated the Sirdar, and although British troops restored order and the King of Egypt dissolved the Parliament, the extremists remained defiant. The students refused to attend the schools, and, despite Zaghlul's resignation of the Prime Ministership, the people returned a majority of his supporters, and on the very first day the new Parliament met made it clear that any other Government than one led by Zaghlul was impossible.

Zaghlul is dead, but his influence survives. His successors have walked along the same road, patterning their methods on his; their demands have been and still are echoes of those he made, sometimes ringing louder than the master-voice.

The evil that men do lives after them, the good is often interred with their bones. Lord Robert Cecil is no longer in office. President Wilson and Lord Milner have gone to their rest, but the effects of the famous Fourteen Points, the tentative treaty with Zaghlul, and the note of rainbow promises still stir in the witches' cauldron of Egyptian politics.

Every attempt by Britain at conciliation has been futile. In 1924 the British Government vainly endeavoured to find a basis of agreement upon the four reserved points; a more favourable occasion seemed to present itself in July 1927, when the Prime Minister of Egypt, Sarwat Pasha, accompanied King Fuad to London.

THE DRAFT TREATY

Following conversations with the Foreign Secretary upon the general situation, Sarwat Pasha communicated a draft of a treaty to the Foreign Secretary as a basis for negotiations. This draft Britain submitted to the various Dominion Governments, and a counter-draft was prepared to which the Dominions agreed. This Sarwat Pasha considered, and he returned to London in November 1927 to continue the negotiations. After discussing and revising certain items of the text as sub-

mitted by Sarwat Pasha, Britain agreed to the draft treaty, subject to ratification by the respective Parliaments. The sequel is known to all the world. The Government of which Sarwat Pasha was the nominal head contemptuously rejected the treaty. Sarwat Pasha resigned. Acclaimed by the hoarse shouts of riotous mobs, Nahas Pasha, a former colleague, took the lead.

The news of the rejection of the treaty and the resignation of Sarwat Pasha the British Government received with disappointment and pained surprise, but another shock awaited them.

THE ASSEMBLIES BILL

The Oriental mind, steeped for ages in the vat of despotism, is unable to understand the principles and methods of democratic government. What the leaders of the Wafd say they want is that the people of Egypt should govern themselves; what they really want is that they should govern the people of Egypt. And their concept of government is based upon the immemorial practice of the East, where Government exists only for the benefit of those who govern.

The leaders of the Wafd cannot understand that the British Government takes a pride in governing justly; that it is sincerely anxious to promote the well-being of the people of Egypt. They have discovered that the rulers of Britain cannot be bribed, but they have had reason to believe that Britain is prepared to grant to force what it denies to reason. By violence the Nationalists have wrung from Britain concession after concession. The treaty gave them more and substantial concessions, but it excited their cupidity and their ambition, inflamed by the prospect of gathering all power into their own hands. To govern Egypt justly, to secure to the humblest fellah the full reward of his labours, did not appeal to them. In the scheme of their ambitions the fellah was a poor dupe over whose back they could climb to power and then condemn to labour in *corvée* for a

pittance. Their only concern with justice was to sell it to the highest bidder. But that they might govern after their own hearts it was necessary to drive the British out of Egypt. Having rejected the treaty, they determined to launch a fresh and still more vigorous campaign of riot and murder. To do this with comparative impunity it was necessary to secure, if not the co-operation, at least the non-interference of the police, so they forced through the Legislature a Bill which made lawful public meetings, called to preach sedition and open revolt, and prohibited police interference except upon the request in writing of the organisers of the meetings. But this monstrous perversion of the law for the protection of men whose avowed purpose was to trample upon all law proved too much for the complaisant British Government.

THE ULTIMATUM TO EGYPT

After years of vacillation, of yielding to organised clamour and violence, on April 29th, 1928, it handed to the Egyptian Government an ultimatum, bluntly declaring that Britain could not consent to any arrangement in Egypt which imperilled British interests; that she could not withdraw her army nor allow Egypt direct representation at any foreign court; and notifying Nahas Pasha that unless he assured the High Commissioner by seven o'clock on the morning of May 2nd that the Assemblies Bill would be withdrawn, Britain would take drastic action.

This note stirred the extremists, to whose machinations the rejection of the treaty was due, to an expression of shocked surprise and dismay. They could not understand this staggering change of front. They had been led—nay, encouraged—to expect something very different.

After some tall talk, unaccompanied by any serious public demonstrations, the Bill was accordingly withdrawn, or, as the Wafd put it to save their faces,

postponed. But no one expected less. The Wafd thoroughly appreciated and respected this form of government. They understood ultimatums and stern punishment treading sharply upon the heels of offence. It is indeed the only kind of government they could understand.

But although they formally complied with the demands which they lacked the power to refuse, they did not abandon their long-cherished ambitions without first exhausting every means to embarrass and circumvent the British Government, and they set about the campaign with such energy that it became apparent that so long as Nahas Pasha and his friends remained in office, we could not hope for peace in Egypt. So King Fuad took the only course open to him: he dismissed Nahas Pasha and appointed in his place a man after his own heart, dissolved the Parliament, and so that the new Premier might have an opportunity to give to the land the abiding blessings of peace, order, and good government, declared the new Ministry's intention of ruling the country without a Parliament for the next three years.

Bombed out of their dugout, Nahas Pasha and his friends rushed about the country splitting the heavens with hoarse shouts of furious protest and angry threats, seeking to stir the people to rise and mutiny. But the new Government, reinforcing the police with the military, received this manufactured discontent implacably. And when Nahas Pasha, seeking to lend the colour of authority to his campaign of lawlessness, secretly called a meeting of the members of the dissolved Parliament at which 150 Wafd deputies and 60 Senators attended and carried a resolution of "no confidence" in the Government and declared its acts illegal, the new Prime Minister, Mahomed Mahmoud Pasha, sternly warned Nahas Pasha against defying the new régime, and notified him that "the Government will forcibly prevent such meetings and will hold Nahas Pasha responsible for inciting the movement."

IV

THE SITUATION NOW

And there at the moment¹ the matter rests. The position is extremely difficult; it is worse now than it was in 1921. We cannot recede, we dare not advance. The treaty so contemptuously rejected marks the extreme limit of concessions Britain can afford to make. No one can say what developments may ensue, but Britain's course is clear. She cannot exorcise the spirit of unrest from the body of Egypt; no concessions she makes will bring peace to this turbulent land. A settlement that ignores fundamental facts cannot endure.

Britain has done great things for Egypt—things that rise like the fair oases of her own deserts in the arid life of this unhappy people. They are more than enough to confuse the envious, vindictive critics, who, grasping at the benefits Britain offers, bite the hand that fed them, enriched them, guarded them, taught them. But she can ignore these venomous ingrates—who, though they pretend to speak for Egypt, represent only those who seek to exploit its people for their own ambitious purpose.

What the situation demands is just and firm government. Unless Britain is to stand before the world a self-condemned weakling, she must, I repeat, turn her back at once and for ever upon the feebleness and vacillation that have devitalised her policy during the past ten years. She must abandon those futile attempts to conciliate men who interpret concessions as weakness; she must cease to apologise to the world for her presence; she must stand proudly but firmly as becomes a great nation with a splendid record of work done for Egypt; and she must continue to act as the guardian of the Egyptian people, of the interests of the Empire and of civilisation, maintaining order, compelling respect for the law, benign but strong. Then will all be well. The economic life of the country will pursue its normal routine; the land will be tilled, seed will be sown,

¹ August 1928.

harvest will be gathered, the work in the cities carried on, property will be safe, the fruits of every man's labour assured him, justice will be done to all, and there will be peace and prosperity in the ancient land of Egypt. But if mawkish sentiment be allowed to cloud reason, if the British forces are withdrawn or their arm paralysed by feebleness of purpose, and the extremists are permitted to have their way, chaos will descend upon the country, and we will have a situation menacing the Empire, the peace of the world, and the welfare of the people of Egypt.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT ON BRITISH RULE IN AFRICA

I cannot close this chapter with words more appropriate to the present situation in Egypt and the kind of policy it demands than those which fell from the lips of the late President Theodore Roosevelt, one of the greatest statesmen of our age. He speaks as a man long experienced as a ruler of men, as the leader of a great democracy. His words are winged, but they do not lose themselves in the clouds. He faced facts and had a profound contempt for mawkish sentiment. He believed in justification by works. After nearly a year's sojourn in Africa, where he observed with acute vision and matured judgment the work of the British, this great American—the very incarnation of all that is best in his country—summed up his impressions to the civilised world in these memorable words :

“I have just spent nearly a year in Africa. While there I saw four British Protectorates. I grew heartily to respect the men whom I met there, settlers and military and civil officials, and it seems to me that the best service I can render them and you is very briefly to tell you how I was impressed by some of the things I saw. The Sudan is particularly interesting, because it affords the best possible example of the wisdom—and when I say that I speak with historical accuracy—of disregarding the well-meaning but unwise sentimentalists who object to the spread of civilisation at the expense of savagery.

“I remember a quarter of a century ago, when you were engaged in the occupation of the Sudan, that many of your people at home and some of ours in America said that what was demanded in the Sudan was the application of the principles of self-government to the Sudanese, coupled with insistence upon complete religious toleration and the abolition of the slave trade. Unfortunately, the chief reason why the Mahdists wanted independence and self-government was that they could put down all religions but their own and carry on the slave trade.”

PROGRESS OF THE SUDAN

“I do not believe that in the whole world is to be found any nook of territory which has shown such astonishing progress from the most hideous misery to well-being and prosperity as the Sudan has shown during the past twelve years while it has been under the British rule. Up to that time it was independent and it governed itself; and independence and self-government in the hands of the Sudanese proved to be much what independence and self-government would have been in a wolf-pack.

“Great crimes were committed there—crimes so dark that their very hideousness protects them from exposure. During a decade and a half, while Mahdism controlled the country, there flourished a tyranny which for cruelty, blood-thirstiness, unintelligence, and wanton destructiveness surpassed anything which a civilised people can even imagine.

“During those fifteen years, at least two-thirds of the population—probably seven or eight millions of people—died by violence or starvation. Then the English came in; put an end to the self-government which had wrought this hideous evil and restored order; kept the peace and gave to each individual a liberty, which during the evil days of their own self-government not one human being possessed, save only the blood-stained tyrant who at the moment was ruler.

“In Egypt you are not only the guardians of your own interests, you are also the guardians of civilisation, and the present condition of affairs in Egypt is a grave menace to both your Empire and the whole civilised world. You have given Egypt the best Government it has had for at least two thousand years, probably a better Government than it has ever had before—for never in history has the poor man in Egypt, the tiller of the soil, the ordinary labourer, been treated with as much justice and mercy under a rule as free from corruption and brutality as during the last twenty-eight years. Yet recent events, and especially what has happened in connection with and following upon the assassination of Boutros Pasha three months ago, has shown that in certain vital points you have erred. It has been an error proceeding from the effort to do too much and not too little in the interests of the Egyptians themselves; but unfortunately it is necessary for all of us who have to do with uncivilised peoples, and especially with fanatical peoples, to remember that in such a situation as yours in Egypt, weakness, timidity, and sentimentality may cause even more far-reaching harm than violence and injustice. Of all broken reeds sentimentality is the most broken on which righteousness can lean.

“When a people treats assassination as the cornerstone of self-government, it forfeits all right to be treated as worthy of self-government. You are in Egypt for several purposes, and among them one of the greatest is the benefit of the Egyptian people. You saved them from ruin by coming in, and at the present moment, if they are not governed from outside, they will again sink into a welter of chaos. Some nation must govern Egypt. I hope and believe that you will decide that it is your duty to be that nation.”

CHAPTER X

INDIA

INDIA is a world in itself. Its area is nearly equal to that of Europe, excluding Russia. Its population, about 320,000,000, exceeds three-fifths—or if the States upon its borders are included, is nearly four-fifths—of the total population of the Empire. The inclusion of this great and ancient State adds greatly to the prestige and perhaps something to the strength of the Empire. Yet the average citizen of Great Britain or of the Dominions knows very little of the life and conditions of its teeming millions. To him, India is vaguely a land of mysticism and romance—and of late, a land of unrest.

Its relations with Britain are intimate, but although its representatives sit with the representatives of the Dominions around the council-table of the Empire, its position in the British Commonwealth differs fundamentally from theirs. Its history, stretching back into the grey shadow of uncounted centuries, its ancient traditions, and its enormous population and present circumstances, remove it to a plane far different from that on which the Dominions, those lands of yesterday, sparsely settled by men of Western stock with Western traditions, fight out their intricate problems and direct their lives. But although we are the fruits of a newer season and our ways are not their ways, the people of this ancient land are our fellow-citizens. India must work out her own destiny, but when she calls we must listen. And for our own sake as much as hers we cannot ignore conditions in India, for these react upon the Dominions. In South Africa, for example, there is an Indian problem that

has on several occasions threatened to become acute. In Kenya—an embryonic colony—it is THE problem. And even in the Commonwealth of Australia the status and rights of Indians have for years fretted the Government. This, however, is only the fringe of the real Indian question, which goes much deeper.

During recent years there has been much talk in India and throughout the world by Indians and by others who claim to speak for them. These people have appealed to the Dominions directly, telling us that serious complaints go unheeded in India, that grave abuses are left without remedy, that the development and progress of India are being throttled, that the people, impoverished and oppressed, are denied a voice in their own government, and that the only remedy for all this is, as the moderates declare, wider powers of self-government, or, as the extremists have it, evacuation of India by Britain and government of India by the Indians. So, invited by representative leaders of Indian opinion to support these claims, it becomes very much our business to know as far as possible what is the situation. For such profound changes would react most powerfully upon the Empire, and might so severely disturb the existing equilibrium amongst the nations as to endanger the peace of the world.

The idea that the kind of government which suits one people will serve all is as mistaken as would be the contention that one dietary is good for all men under all conditions. To refuse to one people a form of government freely granted to others is not to stamp them as inferiors. Racial origin, political, economic, and national history, tradition, religion, social habits, climate, diet, all mould national character. And upon national character depends largely the place a people will hold in the hierarchy of nations. It is not easily modified.

There does not seem any reason to believe that the Anglo-Saxon of to-day is any less virile or more vicious than he was fifty or five hundred years ago. But al-

though national character is a stable thing, it can be modified. What environment working upon certain stocks has done, environment can undo, but things fashioned slowly through thousands of years are not changed in a day.

There are profound differences between Oriental and Western civilisations, and the Oriental outlook upon life differs greatly from the outlook of the Western world. These differences of character and outlook we may find in all phases of Indian life, social and political. As far back as we can trace our history—and compared with the nations of the East that is not very far—we find, in a more or less rudimentary stage, institutions of free and popular government. We know that from the very earliest days of British history, government rested upon representative institutions through which the people exercised direct control over the affairs of the parish, district, and shire; and when kings attempted from time to time to ride roughshod over the people, they found the English a stubborn, stiff-necked race to whose whims and fancies in the matter of government it was best to submit with as good grace as possible. There were exceptions that did not follow this golden rule, but the end of these was not such as to encourage the others. From the beginning the British race has not only fought for the right of every man to have a voice in the government of his country, but it has proved itself capable of exercising that right in a manner compatible with the progress of the nation.

This, told in baldest outline, is the story of the race to whom the great majority of the people of the Dominions belong. If they have achieved at last full control over their own affairs, it is because they and their ancestors fought for the right for a thousand years and more. And even so, complete self-government has not come to them like a gift from the gods. They have been content to move towards the goal of their desires step by step. To the mysteries of self-government they have served a long and rigorous apprenticeship, and only

quite recently they have gathered the power yearned for through so many stirring years.

Democracy on the grand scale is still in its experimental stage. Whether it will prove itself equal to the task of governing great nations under modern conditions remains to be proved. But one thing is certain—Democracy as we know it is strong men's meat upon which only the few will thrive. That it can be offered to mankind at large as though it were a kind of political and economic *elixir vitæ*—a draught which, being quaffed, will ensure peace, content, and progress to all men—is manifestly absurd.

II

INDIA THROUGH THE AGES

The story of the races from which the people of the Dominions spring tells of one long fight for liberty; the story of India reveals an unbroken submission to despotism. India has never been free, her people have never been united in the struggle for liberty. She has always fallen an easy prey to conquering races. Even when Hindus have ruled, the Government has been despotic. The people have never counted for anything, whether they were governed by aliens or by men of their own race. Conquest, despotism, and oppression have battered down the spirit of the masses for a thousand years. The fierce Arabs overwhelmed its fertile plains and founded Arab dynasties in Sind and Multan as early as A.D. 800. Less than two hundred years afterwards the fanatic warriors of Mahomet, led by Mahmud the Idol-breaker, descended upon India through the mountain passes, capturing cities and castles, overthrowing gods and temples, slaughtering the panic-stricken Hindus, and each year returning with rich booty to their fastnesses in Afghanistan. For five hundred years hosts of fierce and greedy Turks, Afghans, and Mongols trod on each others' heels and fought for the mastery of India. The Indians themselves were never able adequately to resist

these invaders. They suffered. In 1526 Babar the Turk founded the Moghul Empire, and for two hundred years his capable successors held the Indian passes.

The Moghul Empire was of the ordinary type of Asiatic despotism—sometimes, as under Akbar, wise and tolerant, at others weak and tyrannical, but always irresponsible personal government. For India it meant merely a new set of conquerors. But the new-comers brought with them the vigour of the North—they came from the plains of the Oxus, beyond the Kabul Hills, and they drew an unlimited supply of recruits from among the finest fighting races of Asia. In physical strength and hardihood they were like the Norsemen and Normans of Europe.¹

And this is the story of India: ever, save for the briefest intervals, under the heel of the conqueror; always acquiescing in rule by the one who sometimes claimed descent from the gods; never desiring, never understanding a democratic form of government. Time, intrigue, and force have worked their will throughout India's chequered history, but always has emerged from every crisis the ruler surrounded by princes, nobles, and organised force, beneath his feet a crushed, a submissive people.

III

DISUNITED INDIA

But in speaking about India we must avoid as far as possible sweeping generalities. There is not one India, but many. We hear a great deal of talk about a United India, and some of those eloquent men who claim to be the spokesmen of India invite the Dominions to support a movement for the realisation of this ideal, which, they say, is almost within reach. Unity is a great ideal. Some day perhaps the whole world will march in step, speaking one language, acknowledging one ruler, worshipping one God. When that great day dawns, the world will see a United India as these gentlemen would have

¹ Holderness, *Peoples and Problems of India*.

us understand it, but it is most improbable that we will see it sooner. People speak of India as though it were a national unit like Britain or France, or a country inhabited by people of one race and one tongue. We could with more truth speak of a United Europe, for certainly there are not wider divergencies of race, language, religion, traditions, and ideals amongst the peoples of Europe than amongst the peoples of India, where many races speak no less than two hundred and twenty languages.

THEIR INFINITE DIVISIONS

But race and language are not the only barriers which stand in the way of a United India. Religion, tradition, social customs, rise like angels with flaming swords to keep these peoples apart. Of the 320,000,000 inhabitants, about 65,000,000 are Mohammedans, most of the remainder are Hindus, but these again are divided into many sects. Some belong to the fighting races, some are unwarlike. In the main the Mohammedans belong to the races that conquered and ruled India for centuries. This naturally accentuates the differences between Moslem and Hindu, which are expressed in bitter antagonism. The Mohammedans view with distrust and natural dislike the passing of authority into Hindu hands, especially where those empowered are of the class which previously had no social account whatever. These people, so often of obscure birth, came through their knowledge of English and their education in British colleges wholly to manipulate and control the municipal councils and exercise a wide influence in national affairs.

People say that relations between Moslems and Hindus are much better than they were, and that, united in a common cause against British rule in India, they are rapidly forgetting their ancient feuds. There is perhaps some truth in this, but, in view of the recent Moslem-Hindu riots, we should do well to discount very much of what we are told.

CASTE

Then there is the caste system,¹ which to treat adequately would require a whole book. Caste, the dominant factor in the social and economic lives of the Hindu population, is the very negation of Democracy's basic principle—equality. Where caste is, democratic government cannot possibly be. Caste must not be confused with class—caste and class are essentially and entirely different. Western peoples do not understand caste; they have never known it. Slavery and serfdom they understood in the past, but long ago they were suppressed. Class they have always known and at times tolerated, but more often denounced. In modern times class distinctions are much less rigid, and with the march of democracy society tends to become more fluid.

In the Dominions, for example, there are no barriers between the child of the poorest labourer and the highest position in the country. If he has the necessary qualities of mind and body he may become the chief priest, the chief magistrate, the political head of the country—wealth, honours, and position are all within his grasp. There are no worlds he cannot aspire to conquer. And

¹ In bygone days the caste system may have served a useful purpose, for it obviously solves, or at all events simplifies, many problems. Under a despotic form of government where the Brahmans alone were educated and ruled directly or indirectly through the Princes—whose Ministers of State they became through succeeding generations—the caste system of which the Brahman is the apex allotted to every individual a definite task and gave him an assured position. In the economic sphere it created a number of guilds or trade-unions, which covered the whole field of industrial activity. Every trade or calling had its own guild or union, and all work at that trade or calling had to be done by members of the union and by none other. There was no such thing as free labour, and no one could become a member of the union who was not born into it. On the other hand, if it was impossible for an outsider to get into the union, it was impossible for those inside to get out, unless they went out feet first. You were born in it, and you had to die to leave it. Viewed from the standpoint of modern trades-unionism, one must confess that the system had its virtues. Amongst others, no one dared attack it, for to do so was to incur the wrath of the gods and of the Brahmans, their vicegerents on earth.

in England, although class distinctions are cleaner cut than in the Dominions, nothing prevents a son of the people becoming a belted earl if his ambitions urge him to enter the narrow circle of the hereditary nobility. Class at its worst is a barrier which the individual may surmount, but caste is a prison from which he cannot hope to escape while life lasts. The child of a man born in a caste the members of which are condemned to act as scavengers of the community can look forward to nothing better—a scavenger he was born, and a scavenger he must live all the days of his life.

One cannot exaggerate the extent to which caste affects the social, economic, and national life of India. It starves the bodies, it cramps and deadens the minds, it tortures the souls of untold millions. Seen through Western eyes, it is a monstrous thing.

THE UNTOUCHABLE

There are in India to-day some sixty millions of people below the lowest stratum of caste—people outside the pale of society. They may not intermarry with those above them. They are ignorant—none may teach them. No matter how great, how urgent their need, none may succour or aid them. They are social lepers—untouchables—whose very shadows pollute the paths along which the high-caste Indian walks. Yet the only crime these unfortunates have committed is to be born of parents outside the pale! Against these hapless souls all doors are barred and bolted; for them there is no hope. Nor is the lot of the greater part of the lower-caste natives of ancient India much more fortunate. They were born amidst poverty and squalor, and in poverty and squalor they are condemned to live.

The Brahmans devised the caste system of India to safeguard their privileges,¹ to which among the two hundred and fifty millions of Hindus all things are

¹ Caste was invented by the Aryan invaders of India—who were relatively fair-skinned—to maintain their racial purity. The Sanskrit word for “colour” and “caste” is the same. The purest-blooded and

subordinate. Sixty millions of Untouchables are the base of the caste pyramid, ten millions of Brahmans are its apex. These ten millions are the hereditary priesthood of India, and by the caste system they have bound the vast population in chains of ignorance, superstition, and poverty.

Democracy without equality of all before the law is inconceivable. If India is to take her place amongst the democratic and progressive nations, she must first shake off the fetters of caste. For while caste remains, material progress is almost impossible, and justice can never be assured.

These things—race, religion, caste—are not due to British rule ; they are the inheritance of the ages.

IV

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

India is very poor. Observers have estimated that the value of the annual production of British India (pop. most aristocratic Aryans were the chiefs of the tribes and the priests. Their immediate supporters were the soldiers, the second caste ; the merchants and artisans formed the third caste ; and the fourth were the servants—still Aryan, but not so pure. These four castes still remain—Brahman, Kattriya, Vaishya, and Sudra—but they have been divided and subdivided until there are now 2,300(?) of them, and outside these the 60,000,000 Outcastes or Untouchables, descendants of the original Dravidian race which the Aryan invaders conquered four thousand or more years ago.

And this is the people which, their eloquent spokesmen tell us, passionately protests against the colour line being drawn by Western nations, which denounces the " White Australia " policy as narrow, selfish, and unjust, which rends the heavens because South Africa refuses to accord it full civic rights—the people which loudly demands of the world equal treatment, posing as men upon whom shameful indignities have been heaped, who have been denied what in their own land the humblest enjoyed as his inalienable birthright.

What appalling hypocrisy ! The whole structure of Hinduism rests upon the colour bar which these men so bitterly denounce. Equality of treatment ! What do they know about equality save that which they have learned from the British ? How do they treat that sixty millions of God's creatures whom they scornfully call " outcastes " ? How are they treated by the Brahman, whose claims to be regarded as a superior being rests upon his claim—more or less valid—to being a white man ?

247,000,000) in 1920 was £1,900,000,000, which gives £7 12s. per capita, or fivepence a day for every man, woman, and child. Compare this with the wealth produced in the United Kingdom (pop. 47,000,000) during 1920—£2,500,000,000—which gives an average of £53 per capita, or nearly eight times as much as the income of the Indian! When we add that the wealth of India is at least as unevenly distributed as the wealth of Britain, and that consequently the great mass of the Indian people have considerably less than fivepence¹ a day with which to keep body and soul together, we begin to understand how they live. The lives of the poor in the Western world are wretched enough in all conscience, but the poverty of India touches depths which the dwellers in the lowest stratum of British society have never plumbed. Theirs is not poverty as we know it, but a ceaseless and hopeless struggle against death. They do not live; they exist. The masses of the people are devitalised, they have no reserve of strength, they cannot fight against disease, and when famine comes they die like flies.²

Yet India is a fertile land, well watered by many great rivers, with a good rainfall in four seasons out of five. The people live by the land and on the land. It is a country of villages, for there are 500,000 villages and only 1,521 towns and cities. Twenty-five millions of the inhabitants live in the towns and cities and 295,000,000 in villages; 224,000,000 are actually engaged in agriculture. They are very poor, and they are poor not because they flock to the towns or are lazy, but because, although they labour hard and long, the land yields them little.

The fault is not in the soil but in the people who own

¹ William Digby—*Prosperous British India*—estimates that the average income of the working classes in India in 1899–1900 was equal to one halfpenny a day for each man, woman, and child, or twopence a day to keep a family of four persons. But Lord Curzon estimated the average yearly income of the Indian as £2 (vide H. M. Hyndman, *Father India*).

² Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, 1919, says that in the great influenza epidemic no less than six million people died in India, and this he attributes to the poverty of the people and consequent lack of resisting power.

and cultivate it. The majority rent the land they farm, and the landlord and the moneylender take heavy toll from them. But if there were no landlords and no moneylenders, the people would still be wretchedly poor, because their methods of agriculture are not only primitive, but rob the land of the elements necessary for the growth of the crops. The soil is not a widow's cruse from which one can take what one needs and give nothing in return. It is a living thing; it needs rest and nourishment; to attempt to crop the earth year after year without manuring it is as disastrous as working a man day after day without feeding him. India has 150,000,000 oxen and tens of millions of sheep, donkeys, goats, and horses, but except in one or two districts not a single ton of manure from these vast herds goes back into the soil! It is all used for fuel! One can scarcely write calmly of this appalling practice, which falls with deadly effect upon man and beast alike. The soil is impoverished; every crop impoverishes it more; the crops become scantier and scantier, the grass lighter and lighter. There is not enough grain for bread, and because the cattle are ill-fed, the quality and quantity of milk, butter, and cheese are far below what is necessary to nourish the people. Their lives thus become one desperate struggle for food. There is not enough to go round, and they resort to ruinous expedients. Like men dying of want in the desert who cut a vein and drink their own blood, they burn or sell, to keep themselves alive, the manure which is the life-blood of the land, and in doing this accentuate and perpetuate their appalling poverty. Were it not for the life-giving waters of the Ganges and Brahmaputra, which during flood-time cover an immense area with rich alluvial deposits that revitalise the exhausted earth, tens of millions of people would assuredly starve to death.¹ This is one of the principal causes of India's poverty.

¹ Arnold Lupton, *Happy India*, page 74: "The country is capable of producing food for a much larger population than it at present carries." By the use of manures and up-to-date methods of agriculture the grain

EDUCATION

But below all causes of the appalling poverty is ignorance begotten and nurtured by superstition and intensified by the caste system, which has done more to feed the ignorance and so starve the land and the people than anything else. And this ignorance, like the poverty, is abysmal. The people are not ignorant because they are incapable of learning, but because they have never been taught. Only one in eight of the inhabitants of the country can read and write. Western education has touched little more than the fringe of Indian life. Women in India¹ are almost wholly uninfluenced by Western education.

Whether from a social or political point of view this crops could be doubled or quadrupled ; even if they were only increased 20 per cent., the food ration of the people would be substantially increased and a margin left to tide them over famine years. There is no reason why the present wasteful and uneconomic methods should continue ; it is a reflection upon the leaders of the people and the Government of India that they should be allowed to continue.

Ibid., page 72 : "There is plenty of wood and coal in the country." With judicious encouragement of afforestation, every village in those parts of the country which are irrigated would in a few years have an ample supply of firewood at its very doors. The towns could obtain coal instead of buying cow-dung from the agriculturists. Of course many other things must be done to set the people on the high-road to prosperity, but these things must be done first. They cannot be done in a day nor without a great deal of money, but they ought to be done, and they must be done by the Government ; the people are too poor to do them and too ignorant to understand the need for them.

Professor T. Wiberly, in a recent article on the "Rejuvenation of the Earth," stated that one hundredweight of nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia applied to an acre of wheat will on an average increase the yield by six bushels—exactly the quantity required to provide food for an individual throughout the year. That is to say, that by applying from 18 to 22 lb. of nitrogen to a growing crop we harvest an extra 378 lb. of wheat.

What India wants is not Home Rule, but nitrogen and animal manures for her impoverished soil.

¹ Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* : "With the illiteracy of the 121,000,000 women of India and the 28,000,000 of Untouchable males—that is, 150,000,000 people—poverty has nothing at all to do."

is lamentable, and the consequences are extensively injurious. The influence of women in the country is very considerable, and one must regret that it is exerted consistently in a direction opposed to the ethical and educational standards set up in the Western world. The protagonists of an independent India declare that if the people are illiterate, Britain is to blame—that she, for purposes of her own, prefers that the masses shall be uneducated. A legend, current in those circles which attribute to British rule every ill from which India suffers, asserts that before the British came literacy was widespread, and that schools, thronged with eager seekers after knowledge, existed in every village. This ingenuous myth is a fragment of the great delusion of a Golden Age during which the people of India lived for untold generations in peace and plenty, when the great and dreadful spectres of famine and plague were unknown, when art, literature, and philosophy flourished, and India was a happy, care-free land.

But the facts reveal that if ever there was a Golden Age in India—about which we prefer to express no opinion—it had passed away long before the British entered the country. The lives of the mass of the Indian peoples have not been made worse, but better, under British rule. If illiteracy is still the lot of 92 per cent. of the people, the fault does not lie with Britain. To her alone belongs the credit of having first—within historical times at all events—attempted to educate the people of India irrespective of rank, wealth, or caste. There are spots on the sun, and no doubt Britain has made mistakes in her educational policy. But for the most part these mistakes spring from the earnest desire to interfere as little as possible with the social and religious customs and culture of the Indian peoples. Until the British came, the Brahmans discouraged education among the mass of the Hindu peoples. In the mythical Golden Age, woe betide the low-caste man who dared to study books, for they slaked his avid thirst for learning by pouring molten lead into his ears! And

at heart the majority of the Brahmin class has not changed.

GHANDI'S PANACEA

Mr. Ghandi, one of the greatest of the leaders of Swaraj,¹ opposes education of the people. "What do you propose to do," he asks, "by giving the peasant a knowledge of letters? Do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage or his lot?" Aye, there's the rub! Mr. Ghandi sees clearly enough that with education the old order of things is doomed, that a system divinely ordained for the well-being of the few and the poverty and misery of the many cannot co-exist with compulsory education. So for him and the vast majority who followed him—while he dared to lead—"the ancient school system is enough."

Under the Dyarchy (1919-20), to which we shall refer in a few moments, primary education was made compulsory throughout the chief provinces of British India. The Government enforces this law—which is full of loopholes—only in a few localities. And this generally is due to the fact that under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, State-school education was entrusted to the Indian Minister responsible to elected Indian Legislative Councils. These gentlemen discovered that it was much more difficult to provide the means of educating children and of compelling the parents to send them to school than to sit back and denounce the British for their inactivity. The net result of entrusting the education of the Indian people to Indians was that in 1924, after five years of native administration, only 7,000,000 pupils attended school out of approximately 36,500,000 of school age.

We do not cite this to criticise, much less condemn

¹ Home Rule; government of India by Indians. Mr. Ghandi is a most remarkable man. He is not a Brahmin. For some years he was the acknowledged leader of Swaraj. He could and did call spirits from the vasty deep. They came when he did call them, but refused to do his bidding when his commands and their wishes did not run side by side.

Indian administration of Indian affairs. We do not say that British administration could have achieved more. We are content to allow the facts to speak for themselves. Admittedly the difficulties in the way of educating the masses are extraordinarily great. The diversity of languages, religions, caste distinctions, social customs, economic conditions, and the ignorance and superstitions of the people combine to render the educational problem one of tremendous difficulty.

But if India wants representative Government, she must follow other nations, and prepare herself by prolonged efforts in education and political apprenticeship for the great responsibilities Democracy imposes upon the people. Without this preparation, popular government is impossible.¹

POPULATION HEALTH

As one might expect of a people who are underfed and live under such appalling insanitary conditions, India's death-rate is very high. The average infant mortality for Bombay in 1923 in one-roomed tenements in which 13·7 of the population live was 828·5 per 1,000!! The death-rate for India during the influenza year 1919 was 62 per 1,000, compared with 17 per 1,000 in Great Britain. In both countries the death-rates were above the average, which in India is about 30·9 compared with 11·7 in Great Britain.²

Despite the high death-rate, the population of India has grown very rapidly since Britain assumed responsibility for its government. From time immemorial the number of the people of India did not exceed 200,000,000—probably it was considerably less—but British rule, providing more efficient organisation, constructing roads, railways, irrigation, and other great public works, has

¹ Speech of H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught at inauguration of Indian Parliament in 1920 (?), Delhi.

² The Director of Public Health for Bengal reports (July 1928) 1,500,000 deaths; half of these are children under fifteen years of age.

enabled the country to support 320,000,000. But when we consider the conditions under which the great masses of the people of India live, we must doubt whether this gift of life is a blessing or a curse. For the greater part of the Hindu population is devitalised. Of the total number of deaths in India in 1918—15,000,000 out of a population of 250,000,000 (British India only)—no less than 12,500,000 were due to cholera, small-pox, plague, fever, and dysentery.

We are told that these diseases can be almost wiped out; that better sanitation, a pure water-supply, the treatment of the swamps and stagnant pools to kill the malaria mosquito (*Anopheles*) would reduce the death-rate materially. And if this is true, it is clearly the duty of the Government to attack these problems earnestly and without delay. But the position is very difficult. If the millions who now die from cholera, plague, malaria, dysentery, and fevers of one kind and another were kept alive, the condition of the people generally would become worse rather than better, unless the food-supply were increased by better methods of agriculture.

What a monstrous circle! The misery of it must fall unsensationally upon most Western hearts, for they could never believe that degradation, suffering, poverty, and despair a thousand times worse than the degradation and despair they see in their own districts are the common background of the Indian panorama. Yet it is so. The people are poor because they are ignorant, and they are ignorant because they are superstitious. A trilogy of desperate evils!

But there is some light on the problem. Regeneration lies not in the womb of political reform. Give the Indian what his orators say he wants, and fundamentally nothing would change. The rulers, whatever they called their system, would still rule despotically, and down the scale of caste the people would pass the despotism to those beneath them. Millions would still starve and die and despair, for hundreds of years of

custom have crystallised in those minds reactions from which they cannot escape.

And they cannot escape from these reactions, these inevitable customary movements of their life, because they have not economically room in which to work and manœuvre. They cannot pause to learn new ways of thinking, because the barren earth cries incessantly for their labour.

No! Obviously India must search for the source of her new life not in the fascinating manifestoes of her demagogues, but in the simple though stupendously trying programme of economic reform. That is the real problem. The recasting of the country's life on sound economic principles must come first. Education, better sanitation, and health will come later naturally, but until the people are fed, until they can raise their eyes from the battle for existence, no one will ever improve their lives.

SELF-GOVERNMENT

A short explanation of the measure of self-government she now enjoys and the uses she has made of it will help the people of the Empire outside India to decide how far she is fit to exercise wider powers.

The policy of the British Government has been to extend to Indians an ever-increasing share in the control of their own affairs. This purpose, kept steadily in view since Britain commenced to govern India, is publicly declared in the preamble to the Act of 1919 giving effect to the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme. This scheme was evolved, amid the storm and turmoil of the closing year of the war, "to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the British Empire."

Under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms the supreme

power in India is the British people, represented by the British Crown and Parliament acting through the Secretary of State for India, who sits in the India Office in London. The supreme Government in India is that of the Governor-General in Council, commonly called the Government of India. The Crown appoints the Governor-General and his Council, which consists of seven departmental heads, of whom three are Indians. Then comes the Indian Legislature, with its Upper House, or Council of State, and its lower Chamber, or Legislative Assembly.

The Council of State comprises 60 members. Of these 34 are elected, and 26, of whom not over 20 may be Government officials, are appointed by the Viceroy. The Legislative Assembly consists of 144 members, of whom 103 are elected. Of the remaining 41, all nominated by the Viceroy, 26 must be members of the Government, and the rest are named to represent the minor interests of the country. Both chambers are mainly Indian, and are constituted with a view to due representation of the several provinces into which for purposes of administration the country is divided. Each of the nine major divisions is controlled by a Governor with an Executive Council, of which at least 70 per cent. must be elected by the people. The ambit of these Provincial Parliaments is wide, and their authority over matters intimately affecting the daily lives of the people is for all practical purposes plenary.

The Montagu-Chelmsford scheme is a great reform. It rests upon sound foundations. It gives India a Parliament of her own, a Parliament in which, though they do not control it, the Indians' influence is very great. It establishes Provincial Parliaments, in which Indians are in the majority, and in which they have direct authority over many most important matters.

The establishment of an Indian Parliament was a long stride towards complete self-government; it marked in a definite way the lines along which India was progressing. It was the outward and visible sign that the system

of government general throughout the other parts of the Empire was to be extended to India. It was, in effect, Britain's recognition of India's right, when she had served her novitiate, to enter the Commonwealth of British Nations on an equal footing.

It gave to Indians a magnificent platform from which they could address not only their fellow-citizens, but the people of the Empire, and indeed of the whole civilised world. And it afforded the leaders of Swaraj¹ an opportunity to show that they were capable of something more than destructive criticism and frenzied appeals to the passions of the ignorant multitudes.

SWARAJ FOUND WANTING

But these men, to whom millions of Indians were looking for light and leadership, remained aloof, hoping by their policy of non-co-operation to break the Act down. Whatever success the Act has had—and it has some substantial achievements to its credit—has been won in the face of the bitter opposition of the extremists. The attitude of Swaraj has been characteristic of the mentality of the majority of its leaders. They are, almost without exception, demagogues, and, because they are Orientals, incapable of the faintest glimmer of an idea of government other than autocracy. They are men without vision who live in a world of dreams, men who, under the guise of patriotism, appeal to the passions of the people, who carry the shibboleth of “No violence” ever upon their lips, yet incite the credulous multitude to rebellion and murder. They are infirm of purpose, incurably restless, but incapable of steady progress in one direction. Blow-

¹ The doctrine of Swaraj or political independence was first promulgated by Babu Chundra Pal, a Bengali of education, ability, and great eloquence. It has found many disciples, especially amongst the Bengalis, the least warlike of the races of India. The most irreconcilable and bitter amongst the leaders of Swaraj are with few exceptions recruited from that class, which but for the education its members have received from the British colleges would never have emerged from obscurity, to which in Indian eyes their birth and social position condemned them.

ing hot and cold, they launch campaigns with words like liquid fire which set the whole country in a flame ; then, when seeming on the very verge of some great and shattering climax, they withdraw panic-stricken before the spectres their words have conjured up. They set a snare for others and themselves fall into it.

When the Government of India Act came into force, they contemptuously disdained to offer themselves as candidates. At the very height of their popularity they could have secured a majority in the Central Legislature and the Provincial Councils, and carried on their campaign against the British from inside the citadel, embarrassing the Government of India by making the Act unworkable, or, alternatively, proving their fitness to govern by the wise exercise of all authority conferred by the Act and thus making their demands for further powers irresistible.

When, despite their utmost efforts, the scheme worked and they saw the Moderates bending themselves resolutely to the unaccustomed task of government and the despised millions of Untouchables—to whom it opened gates that from time immemorial had been doubly locked against them—eagerly availing themselves of the opportunity to secure representation, they realised that they had committed a strategical blunder from which it was almost impossible to recover. For British rule, culminating in the enfranchisement of the millions outside the pale of society, has created a situation with which Swaraj is finding itself powerless to deal. The waters, dammed up through the ages, have burst through the walls of caste and privilege. For the first time in the history of India all its people are equal before the law.

Beneath the surface of a manufactured revolt against British rule there has been a revolution against the tyranny of caste and social custom. India is on the threshold of a new era.

THE SIMON COMMISSION

Early in 1928 a Commission, headed by Sir John Simon, arrived in India to investigate the working of the Mon-

tagu-Chelmsford reforms and to suggest wider powers of self-government. Swaraj extremists greeted the Commission with a declaration of a *hartal*, or day of mourning—really a general strike—and covered it with terms of opprobrium and insult. Sir John Simon suggested that seven members of the Central Legislature might join the Commission when it was discussing Central or Imperial matters, and seven members of each Provincial Legislature when it discussed local or provincial matters, but Swaraj scornfully rejected this. The leaders of Swaraj will accept no compromise. Nothing short of government of India by Indians and by them alone will satisfy them.

They speak as though British rule had been a blight upon India, stifling her national aspirations and progress. They talk about government of India by Indians! What sort of government will these men give India? Certainly not representative government as the Western world understands it. To allow the people of India to govern themselves is the last thing that enters their heads.

They talk about Unity, Liberty, Equality, and Justice—and the world is invited to believe that the loud-mouthed ones stand with outstretched hands yearning to bring these priceless gifts to an oppressed people. But these men speak with their tongues in their cheeks. They do not seek to bring gifts to the people of India, but to filch from them what British rule has brought. For whatever of Unity there is in India to-day comes of British rule. Whatever of Liberty the people have they owe to Britain. And for the first time in the history of the peninsula, Justice, neither bought nor sold, has been given with even hand to all. The Untouchables and the lower castes have secured representation, and in fact a majority in the Madras Provincial Council. But once British influence was withdrawn, they would be driven outside the pale once more.

Yes! If Britain went, Peace and Justice, the rule of law, toleration, and that ideal of equality which is the only hope for the downtrodden millions of India, would

go with her. Bloodshed and confusion would cross the land. The fighting races of India would sweep with contemptuous and ruthless hand the loud-mouthed talkers from their path.¹ Hindu and Moslem would fly at each other's throat, and in place of one United India there would be many. Once more the North would swoop down from the hills upon the plains of Central India, and all hope for the enfranchisement and improvement in the condition of the masses would be lost irretrievably.

It might be that a pretence of equality would remain, and the Sudra, just as the Negro in the Southern States of America, would be endowed with all the rights of citizenship. He would see with bewildered eyes his name inscribed upon the roll of citizens entitled to vote, but if he dared to exercise that right he would be beaten like a dog.

All these things would inevitably react very powerfully upon the Empire. The disturbance of the equilibrium

¹ The Maharajah of Bikanir, speaking (1928) on behalf of the Princes of India, said: "The Princes will never submit to the painting red of portions of the map of India now yellow and representing the Indian Native States. In no sense and in no manner can we agree to a position implying the subordination of the people of British India. We are not in the position of beggars clad in sackcloth and ashes, and dependent upon your charity or alms, or your consent for the proper safeguarding of our treaties and sovereign rights. We will make a firm stand through thick and thin, at whatever cost, for the King and the British connection." While denying that the Princes opposed the self-government of British India, he demanded to know whether the abuse hurled at the Princes during a recent All-Parties Conference was a foretaste of what was likely to happen under a Swaraj régime. The Maharajah of Patiala, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, is even more emphatic. In a recent statement he said: "The attachment of the Indian Princes to the Crown of England is unshakable. The time has come for us to make clear that our political relations are with the British Crown, and that we and our people will never submit to be ruled by British India, over many parts of which our States in former time held sway. The proposals of the All-Parties Conference have only strengthened our unalterable determination to safeguard at any sacrifice our separate political existence. While we offer friendly co-operation with British India, we and our people will not for one instant tolerate British Indian dictation. We have long been conscious that the silent loyalty of the States counted for less in the world of politics than the vociferous claims of the British Indian leaders."

in India would endanger the peace of the world and bring the Empire perilously near to the abyss of war. That is one fatal bar to granting India independence, or even the full self-governing powers exercised by the Dominions.

There is another not less important. We are a Commonwealth of Free Nations. We are prepared to fight to retain our liberties, and to help our fellow-citizens in India to obtain all the privileges we enjoy. We are prepared to resist, too, any attempt to take away the privileges they now enjoy. It follows from this that unless we have solid guarantees that the grant of wider powers of self-government will not involve a retrogressive policy towards the oppressed classes of India, we shall deem it our duty to oppose it.

BOOK III

CHAPTER XI

FOREIGN POLICY : THE FOREIGN OFFICE

THE FOREIGN OFFICE AT WORK

THE British Empire is a world-Power ; its boundaries march with the boundaries of nearly every country on earth. Its representatives are scattered over the globe. The Foreign Office is the ganglion which radiates all instructions and receives reports of all things of moment said or done within the sphere allotted to each of these officials, who act as the eyes and ears of Britain. The diplomatic and consular staffs, secret agents, and embassies of foreign countries pour into the Foreign Office each day a flood of telegrams, dispatches, and records.

The government of the Empire is not easy. Before the eyes of those who control the British Foreign Office is screened a moving picture—absorbing, varied—of all that goes on behind the veil, as well as those things done in the light of day, in every country under the sun. Court and political intrigues, plots half hatched, international arrangements as yet inchoate, but pregnant with good or evil to the Empire and to the world at large ; the indiscreet utterances of foreign diplomats ; what is happening at Bagdad, Tokio, or Washington ; the whispers of the bazaars ; the latest kaleidoscopic political development in Brazil and Russia ; a dynastic intrigue in Montenegro ; another attempt to assassinate a Balkan Prince ; long communications full of suggestions of movement, of conflict, of clashing interests, of incipient war, and all impinging more or less upon the periphery of the Empire,—all these things and many more fall within the ambit of the Foreign Office, which is thus the repository for matters of which the world outside knows little

or nothing. Without this knowledge of what other nations are doing and what their representatives are saying, British diplomacy would be blind, deaf, and halting. But much is only of use as long as it is kept secret. Even a hint that the Foreign Office knows certain facts may cause most serious harm. Thus the communications of its Diplomatic Corps and secret agents are most highly confidential.

The real attitude of foreign nations, the objective of their rulers, the agents of the Foreign Office state in plain blunt words; but diplomats in their negotiations with foreign embassies walk as men working amongst dangerous explosives. Those charged with the responsibility of conducting the foreign affairs of the Empire must be men of wide knowledge and great tact; they must know when to speak and when to be silent, be prompt in action when action is needed, and if Fabian tactics are called for, know how to apply them; they must have at their command polished phrases and courtly manner, be able to see other men's points of view, and, without yielding anything of substance, fit their own into this frame.

The foreign policy of Britain is neither perfect nor static, but it is an adequate instrument to guide those who manipulate the Empire through the labyrinthine ways of change and clashing interests, scouring out new courses, and blocking up those ancient channels through which for ages navigators have been able to sail freely. It is not necessary to examine this policy very closely or to inquire whether its principles rest upon any rigid moral code. The god of day himself has spots upon his shining face, and Britain has at times turned from the narrow way; but admitting that her policy has not always been just or wise, this much may be said—that it need not fear comparison with the foreign policy of other nations.

Britain has bitter enemies who seek to bespatter her with abuse, who strive to stir up the nations against her, who denounce her now as a hypocrite, now a bully, now

a decadent ; but her record shows that in the main she has worked assiduously for peace and the welfare of mankind. If strength be a crime, then she is a great offender ; but while the Empire has extended, Liberty has established herself more firmly in almost every corner of the world, and everywhere those struggling against autocracy have found within it refuge in their hour of adversity.

WHAT IS "FOREIGN POLICY" ?

What exactly is "foreign policy" ? A definition ought to be easy enough, but the term covers more than we usually recognise. As we generally understand it, foreign policy connotes the policy of a nation on matters that affect other nations. Thus it is distinguished from "domestic policy," which is confined to matters directly affecting its own citizens. This concept is responsible for very much of the indifference which the great mass of people in the Dominions manifest towards questions of foreign policy. A classification which places foreign and domestic policy in two watertight compartments encourages the assumption that we may deal with the one without concerning ourselves with its effect upon the other. The real position is very different. We can draw no hard-and-fast line between domestic and foreign policy, although some questions are obviously within the category of foreign affairs as others are exclusively domestic.

The relations between foreign and domestic policy are intimate. The domestic policy of one country frequently reacts upon other countries, compelling them to adjust not only their domestic policy, but their relations with foreign peoples. Foreign and domestic policy are thus two sides of the same thing. For example, there can be no doubt that the acceptance or rejection of the Locarno Pact is purely a problem of foreign affairs, and any modification of the fiscal system of a country is indisputably domestic. But one could show easily that the Locarno Pact might profoundly affect

the domestic policy not only of the signatories, but of all Europe, and alterations of the fiscal system¹ of any country react severely upon other countries and compel them to readjust their foreign policy, and might even form a *casus belli*.

In the same way, while laws that regulate the admission of the nationals of other countries are clearly within the ambit of domestic policy, yet, as we saw in 1924, strained relations between Japan and the U.S.A. were created by Congress's enactment of the Johnson quota.²

When Signor Mussolini, early in 1920, notified the world that the claims of Italy to a place in the sun—that is, room for expansion, and the right to settle in any country they please—were so just and so strong as to “constitute an appeal, to which the world could not turn a deaf ear,” he was very near the shadowy borderline that separates domestic from foreign policy, as we generally understand it, but when he went on to intimate that if unhappily “the world should harden its heart,” Italy would be compelled to resort to what he euphemistically called “other measures,” there can be no doubt he crossed the Rubicon and was well within the domain of foreign affairs.

¹ Tariffs. The Economic Consultative Committee, appointed by the Council of the League of Nations upon the recommendation of the Economic Conference held in Geneva as a result of the Assembly (September 1927), has advised “that the League of Nations should make a preliminary study of some of the more important principles and tendencies in financial and economic policy and practice which tend to destroy conditions favourable to peace.” Amongst these the Committee regards tariffs as one of the most important, and it is of the opinion that “tariffs, though within the sovereign jurisdiction of the States, are not a matter of purely domestic interest, but greatly influence the trade of the world.” And there has been a great increase in the number of commercial treaties concluded upon principles in accordance with the advice given by the Committee.

² The Johnson quota fixed the number of immigrants permitted to enter the United States at 2 per cent. of the nationals of various countries resident in the United States at the census of 1890. This practically excluded the Japanese, and reduced the number of Italian immigrants to forty-four.

We see therefore that, broadly speaking, any administrative act of one country that affects another must react upon its foreign policy, and readjustments made by the latter may in turn repercuss upon the domestic and foreign policy of other countries.

II

Although it may happen that a foreign policy designed to conserve and promote the interests of the country does not materially prejudice the interests of other countries—it may indeed benefit some of them—such effects are merely incidental to its real purpose. Nations in this respect are neither better nor worse than individuals—each plays for its own hand—and its policy takes on the colour of its environment.

THE FORCE OF ARMS

But there is another point very necessary to be noted here. The foreign policy of a nation is limited and conditioned by the armed forces at its disposal, either its own or those of its allies. For example, a “good Rhine”—that is to say, a boundary-line that gives France control of the strategic points of the Franco-German frontier—is essential to the safety of France. This is the dominant note in the foreign policy of France. There are, of course, other things which concern her—matters of great importance—but they are subsidiary to a “good Rhine,” for it is from that quarter that the French believe danger may come. They may be wrong, they may underestimate the strength of the movement towards peace, but we must admit that their recent experience and the teachings of history for the last thousand years or so are calculated to excuse their attitude of cynical scepticism towards it. Even the Peace Conference had its doubts whether the “war waged to end war” had really done so, and in the Treaty of Versailles not only provided for a “good Rhine” and disarmed Germany, but made the League of Nations—that

ambitious instrument of a lofty and inspiring purpose—the guarantor of France's new frontier. Then there was the Tripartite Treaty—which came to nothing because the United States Senate refused to ratify it—by which Britain and America bound themselves to assist France in the event of German aggression. And, lastly, there is the Locarno Pact, in which—*inter alia*—Britain, Italy, and Belgium agree to help France if she is attacked by Germany. So that behind what we may call the national policy of France are (a) solemn treaties reflecting public opinion of the civilised world, and (b) the armed forces of Britain, Italy, and Belgium. But although, in the opinion of a great majority of the people of the world, a “good Rhine” rests upon sound moral principles, and two great Powers are prepared to back their opinion with all the forces at their command, yet France, although quite alive to the immense value of this moral and material backing, is not taking any chances, for her own armed forces are prepared if necessary to fight alone to maintain her territorial integrity and national interests.

The force behind foreign policy is the length of its rope. The security of the British Empire depends upon its control of the seas—and now also of the air—and as long as adequate armed force assures that control, British foreign policy can proceed freely along any lines considered necessary to safeguard Empire interests. When the force at the disposal of the Empire falls below that level, we must accept a policy dictated by others.

America's traditional policy, the Monroe Doctrine, would be but a futile diplomatic gesture if the resources of 120,000,000 of people were not available to enforce it. Both the Empire and America believe that they have justice and right upon their side, but in the relations between nations, moral right is likely to prove a broken reed unless backed by adequate armed force.

These national policies are not sustained by any moral principle unless the right of every nation to safeguard its interests can be so regarded, but around them the

foreign policies of the three nations turn. They are fundamental ; upon them there can be no compromise ; but other nations accept them only because there is sufficient armed force behind them to compel recognition. When this force falls below the safety-point, they will collapse like a pricked bladder.

THE MORAL POSE

Along with these national policies go of course others, ancillary to those upon which the safety of the country is, or is deemed to be, dependent. Some of these are smoke-screens, others are red herrings drawn across the trail, both affording diplomacy opportunities to rehabilitate its somewhat shattered moral reputation. Nothing appeals more to a world armed to the teeth than eloquent gestures towards world peace, or great moral principles applied to the circumstances of others. The suggestion that other nations should disarm proves irresistible to those who, not threatened by the propaganda, are firmly convinced that the cause of wars is the boundless ambitions and quarrelsome natures of foreigners. It is for this reason, for example, that Mr. Kellogg's proposals for the outlawry of war have been hailed so vociferously in America. The people there see nothing incongruous between the Monroe Doctrine, establishing the hegemony of the United States over nearly one-third of the most fertile area of the earth, enforced by a Big Navy and a Bigger Navy Programme,¹ and the lofty, inspiring, altruistic leadership their country is giving to an ignorant, passionate world from which America remains austere aloof.

Incidentally this moral pose serves to distract attention from the position in Nicaragua, where the great crusade for world-peace has been carried on for months by a

¹ President Coolidge, speaking in September 1928, expressed the hope and belief that the building programme of the U.S. Navy—fifteen additional cruisers of 10,000 tons and one aircraft carrier—would proceed.

select band of enthusiasts from the United States Navy, armed with machine guns.

III

FOREIGN POLICY MOST IMPORTANT TO-DAY

The complexity of the modern world, where indefinitely improving means of communications echo through every corner of the globe the whispers of the most remote and inconsequential countries, where men move with the dispatch of gods, where methods of production demand greater and greater markets, has enormously increased the importance of foreign policy to the masses of the people. It is no longer the prerogative of kings, concerned mainly with dynastic intrigues and schemes of conquest for self-aggrandisement, but is the business of the people, covering all their activities, and intimately affecting their welfare. The relations between nations in the world of to-day are so intimate as to create conditions analogous to the conditions existing between individuals in a crowded city. What a man does in a pioneer settlement on the "edge of the beyond" matters comparatively little to others. If he makes himself too objectionable, somebody may club or shoot him, but within a very wide range he can do what he pleases. In a crowded metropolis, however, laws and regulations hedge about men's lives. The individual is prohibited from acts calculated to circumscribe the liberty of others and is compelled to do those things deemed essential to the welfare of his fellows.

When weeks, months, of journeying separated one nation from another, when the economic, social, commercial, and financial activities of each country were organised on a national basis, what the people of one country did, short of overtly attacking others, mattered very little to their immediate neighbours, and nothing at all to the great world far beyond their narrow gates.

For example, a century ago, war in China would have mattered little to Europe, still less to Australia. For

one thing, they would have known nothing at all about it for months, perhaps for years, after it had happened. For another, nations then were much more self-contained, and their relations very casual. But to-day the situation is different. What is done in Canton or Peking in the morning, the whole world knows in a few hours, and the commercial and economic circumstances of the nations are organised so that they may buy from and sell to China as well as to each other. Interference with trade diminishes production, and that involves depression of trade, unemployment, and disturbance of the financial equilibrium. Thus internecine strife in China reacts more or less seriously upon the rest of the world. And this applies generally. What one nation does affects all, some more than others. For example, Britain pioneered European trade in China. She has very large interests there, and as these were menaced by the warring factions, Britain sent her warships and armed forces to protect British citizens and British interests.

Australia's interests in China are not very important, but, situated as she is at the very gateway to the East, she hopes to build up a very considerable trade with China, and the boycotting of British goods, in which those of Australia are of course included, reacts upon her. The foreign policy of Britain in China, then, is obviously not a matter about which the people of Australia can afford to be indifferent. They may not agree with it, but they are forced to recognise its importance.

IV

THE DOMINIONS' INTEREST

Foreign policy means more to great States than to small ones, especially if these have narrow areas. Small States have fewer points of contact with the outside world. Their interests are more restricted. What they do concerns chiefly their immediate neighbours, and the range of disputes with these is limited, since conditions make for the maintenance of an equilibrium. To the British

Empire, occupying as it does one-fifth of the total land area of the globe, its boundaries marching with the boundaries of nearly every other country, foreign policy is enormously important. Britain must maintain constant guard from every watch-tower through its vast area, and must acquire an intimate knowledge of what other nations are doing or about to do.

The advantages of partnership in the Empire are very great. Each of the free nations that compose it enjoys the privilege and security that its mighty strength confers. On the other hand, its vast extent, its great and varied interests, necessarily increase the risks of dispute with other nations, and the political and economic circumstances of its component parts complicate every problem with factors unknown to States under unitary or federal forms of government.

The position occupied by Britain in the Commonwealth of Nations is unique. Theoretically, the relationship between her and the Dominions is that of *primus inter pares*; but calling things by new names leaves them very much as they were. Mr. Lloyd George and the Inter-Empire Relations Committee and other authorities have declared that the Dominions are absolutely equal with Britain, but although the status of all may be equal, the stature is not, and their circumstances differ so widely that to devise a policy which shall serve all equally well and in the making of which all shall have an equal share is a problem that no one has solved. Britain, by virtue of its wealth, population, prestige, and power, and its contiguity to Europe, is in a different position from the Dominions, and foreign policy bulks much more largely in her national life than in theirs. Tradition and circumstances explain why this is so. The people of Britain, a group of small islands whose highways stretch out across the trackless oceans to the farthest corners of the earth, naturally turn their eyes outward to the world beyond their sea-girt home; they are separated only by a narrow strait from the teeming population of Europe, to whom they sell, from whom they buy. They are intensely

interested in all the world does, for the world is the market in which they distribute their goods. From foreign parts have come to them fortune and fame ; throughout the ages danger has threatened them from the sea. To keep the highways of the sea open, to guard his great possessions across the ocean, to maintain watch lest his interests should suffer, is as natural for the Englishman as it is natural for the Australian to regard his great inheritance as all-sufficient for his needs and ambitions, and gazing upon its vast expanse to become absorbed by its problems and its immensity—and the world forgetting, to deem himself by the world forgot.

This explains why many people in the Dominions seriously believe that but for the foreign policy of Britain there would be little or no danger of their being involved in war. To the Canadian, the United States bulks so largely that what the outside world does seems to him almost a matter of indifference. Canada's relations with her great neighbour are intimate, they form an integral part of her domestic policy ; but she does not wish to be involved in old-world affairs. And this, modified by geographical, racial, and other circumstances, is typical of the outlook of the Dominions generally. Knowing nothing of the world outside, they cannot understand how any dispute could arise between them and any foreign nation. Questions of foreign policy excite little interest, and, except in wartime, do not form part of the policy upon which political parties appeal to the constituencies.

A NEW STAGE FOR AFFAIRS

This illusion that they have nothing in common with the brawling world over the horizon is strengthened by the power of the Empire, which still enables them to pursue their peaceful ways heedless of the storms and treacherous cross-currents of world-politics. But advancing time works many changes ; the strategic centre of the world moves slowly but surely from its ancient base ; the spotlight turns from the Mediterranean to the Pacific,

which seems destined to be the mighty stage upon which the world of to-morrow is to play its part.

The stage fits the times. Its vastness, which in former ages would have served as an impassable barrier, isolating the dwellers upon its opposite shores as completely as though they had lived upon different planets, has shrunk through man's conquest of the air,¹ through the miracle of wireless, and through improved methods of communication generally, until the thousand millions of people scattered round its far-flung shores are within hailing distance of each other, and daily feel themselves drawn, as by some mighty, irresistible force, closer and closer together. In a little while it seems inevitable that there will be a clash of interests. Change now moves on the wings of the wind. The East, which slumbered through eventful ages, has awakened at last, and moves restlessly. For good or evil it has resolved to attune itself to the circumstances of the Western world. The effects of this awakening will be revolutionary, reacting upon all the nations. What will ultimately come of it no man can say, for it is an incalculable factor. But assuredly the Western nations will have to readjust their policies to cope with this new and prodigious force in world-affairs.

Upon Australia, a Western nation at the gateway to the East, a vast and rich land with a population of six millions scattered round the littoral of an almost empty continent, with its national ideal of a "White Australia" translated into a policy that in practice prohibits the teeming millions of the awakened East from entering into what seems to them an economic paradise, the effect will most assuredly be profound and far-reaching.

Foreign policy, which the sheltered circumstances of their country have permitted citizens of Australia to ignore or to regard with languid and indifferent eye, which now appears as a kind of devil's broth simmering

¹ Kingsford Smith and Ulm, with two Americans acting as navigator and wireless operator, flew from San Francisco to Brisbane, Australia, in 8 days, landing at Honolulu and Suva *en route*. Their flying-time was 3½ days.

in the cauldron of far-off Europe, we will then see involves matters at our very door—matters pregnant with the promise of life and the menace of death. The Dominions then will see foreign politics as real politics by which all others are conditioned, and they will be very eager to shape them for their own interests.

Whether their ideas on foreign policy will coincide with those of Britain or of the other Dominions is another matter. And if, perchance, there should be a difference between them too wide for the bridge of compromise—what is to happen?

DOMINION STATUS

I

BEFORE THE WAR

Before the war the direction of the general foreign policy of the Empire was in theory and in practice vested in the Government of the United Kingdom.¹ Prior to 1914 the Government of the United Kingdom was the constitutional warden of that common life of the Empire beyond the life of each of its parts, which is symbolised by the Crown and shown in all lands and seas by the Flag. There were times when the Dominions were consulted in respect to issues in which they were specially interested, and more rarely they were directly associated with the United Kingdom in the negotiations; but, broadly speaking, the relation between the Empire and foreign countries was recognised as the special prerogative of the British Government, and a demand by the Dominions for a share in shaping foreign policy was not seriously pressed.

At the 1911 Conference, as I showed in an earlier chapter, the question was rather timidly mooted, and the technical right of the Dominions to be consulted “as far as possible” was conceded. But no one suggested that the control of foreign affairs should pass from

¹ Round Table.

the hands of Britain, and a resolution affirming the right of the Dominions to be consulted received little support from the Dominion representatives. Indeed, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Canadian Prime Minister, expressly disclaimed "any desire on the part of Canada to be consulted on questions of foreign policy other than those directly affecting the Dominion."

The 1911 Conference, nevertheless, took a hesitant but definite step towards the new order of things in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Even to the most reactionary of the elder Statesmen it became obvious that the Dominions were growing up, and that this must be recognised; but the concession to consult the Dominions "as far as possible" did not surrender Britain's control of Empire relations with foreign Governments. Mr. Asquith¹ had stated most definitely that Britain could not share, and the Dominions did not seriously desire a change. Public opinion in these young countries was unformed on the matter. Very few gave it a thought. Generally, those who did, held that foreign policy ought to be left in the hands of Britain alone, and that the Dominions could not expect to share in shaping and controlling the policy of the Empire towards the outside world. They considered that in a sphere where Britain's interests were overwhelmingly greater than those of the Dominions and upon questions on which her statesmen were presumably better informed, it would be presumptuous and even unsafe to intrude. This attitude of self-abnegation was mainly due to the belief that foreign policy did not concern the Dominions and so might safely be left to Britain.

LESSON OF THE WAR

But the war created an entirely new situation. The manner of its coming—abrupt and, except by the few, wholly unexpected; its ferocity, and its colossal range; its demoralising effects upon trade, industry, and finance;

¹ Lord Oxford and Asquith.

the awful sacrifice of life and the ruinous expenditure it involved—and, above all, the way we were forced to subordinate all matters within the sphere of domestic affairs to the one desperate purpose of winning a war in which the liberty and very existence of free nations were at stake, awoke in the dullest and most indifferent some recognition of the vital importance of foreign policy to the Dominions. In the face of a war into which the Empire had been drawn by the violation of an old treaty made more than half a century previously—a treaty not one in a thousand had heard of—it was impossible to ignore the intimate relations between foreign policy and the exercise of the self-governing powers of the Dominions. People realised that foreign policy, which, because they thought it involved matters too remote to concern them, they had been quite willing to leave to Britain, had turned out to be of tremendous importance, and in ever-increasing numbers they became convinced that it was quite impossible to regard the Dominions as self-governing communities if on matters of life and death they were mere straws in the stream.

But the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of war prevented the great majority from seeing the position clearly. The mass of the people so entirely, so enthusiastically, favoured the attitude of the British Government towards Germany that they were not in a mood to scrutinise too closely the bearing of what had happened upon Dominion status. Britain had declared war; they strongly approved: that was enough for them. That they had not been associated with Britain in the negotiations which preceded her entry into the war, that they knew nothing of these negotiations except what they were told, mattered little to people swept on in a stupendous uprush of patriotic fervour. Very few realised during the early months of that Homeric struggle that, no matter what the feelings of the people of the Dominions were, it was inevitable that the whole Empire should be plunged into war by Britain's declaration. But as time cleared away the first madness of passion, and the Empire settled

down to fight this battle out to the death, the true position of the Dominions became obvious to many who had hitherto been quite content to leave foreign affairs with Britain alone. As for the Governments of the Dominions, they were compelled to realise, from August 1914 to the close of hostilities, that while in theory they exercised the powers usually vested in the Governments of free nations, in practice, when Britain declared war, they had to dance to the tune played by another. Unanimously they resolved that this must never happen again.

BRITAIN TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

With this resolve they were to find the British Government entirely in agreement. For whatever had been the attitude of British statesmen before August 1914, the war had not run many months when it became clear that in the face of the magnitude of the sacrifices the Dominions had made and were making, and the important part their armed forces were playing in the struggle, nothing less than a frank recognition of their equality of status with Britain would serve; and that this carried with it the right of the Dominions to an effective voice in the moulding of the foreign policy of the Empire. We shall see that the British Government has formally recognised this right on very many occasions; that assemblies presided over by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and composed of the Prime Ministers of all the self-governing Dominions and their colleagues have solemnly declared it; and that it has become one of the conventions of the Constitution. Asserted and recognised during the war, it has been confirmed in Imperial Conferences and in many speeches delivered at different times by Prime Ministers representing all the political parties in the United Kingdom, formally endorsed by the Inter-Empire Relations Committee of 1926, and, in theory, is as well established as is the right of the Dominions to legislate on all domestic matters.

The Report of the Inter-Empire Relations Committee covers a wide field and demands separate treatment, but

I may quote here three Declarations of Rights. In his opening speech to the 1921 Conference Mr. Lloyd George said :

“In recognition of their services and achievements in the war, the British Dominions have now been accepted fully into the comity of nations by the whole world. They have achieved full national status, and they now stand beside the United Kingdom as equal partners in the dignities and responsibilities of the British Commonwealth.”

Sir Robert Borden, in his speech to the Canadian Parliament in 1919, set out the position of the Dominion representatives in the Imperial council-chamber in terms equally clear and comprehensive :

“We meet here on terms of equality under the presidency of the First Minister of the United Kingdom . . . Ministers from six nations around the council-board, all of them responsible to their respective Parliaments and to the people of the countries they represent. Each nation has its voice upon questions of common concern and highest importance as the deliberations proceed ; each preserves unimpaired its perfect autonomy, its self-government, and the responsibility to its own electorate.”

And in 1919 General Smuts, during the debate in the South African Parliament on the ratification of the Peace Treaty, set out the new status of the Dominions in language no less clear and precise :

“The Union Parliament stands on exactly the same basis as the British House of Commons, which has no legislative power over the Union. . . . Where in the past British Ministers could have acted for the Union (in respect of foreign affairs), in future Ministers of the Union will act for the Union. The change is a far-reaching one which will alter the whole basis of the British Empire. . . . We have received a position of absolute equality and freedom not only among the other States of the Empire, but among the other nations of the world.”

That the British Government itself fully realised the significance of the change which had taken place is shown by the official statement made by Lord Milner, at that time Secretary of State for War.

"The Peace Treaty recently made in Paris," said Lord Milner, "was signed on behalf of the British Empire by Ministers of the self-governing Dominions as well as by British Ministers. They were all equally plenipotentiaries of His Majesty the King, who was the 'High Contracting Party' for the whole Empire. This procedure illustrates the new constitution of the Empire which has been gradually growing up for many years past. The United Kingdom and the Dominions are partner nations, not yet indeed of equal power, but for good and all of equal status."

DOMINIONS AND THE PEACE

The peace negotiations and the Treaty of Versailles were milestones in the constitutional development of the British Commonwealth. They embodied a formal recognition not only by Britain, but by foreign Powers, of the complete autonomy of the Dominions and of their equality of status with the United Kingdom. To the treaty there was only one High Contracting Party on behalf of the Empire—the King; but for the first time Dominion Ministers signed for their respective Dominions in exactly the same way as British Ministers signed for the United Kingdom. The Covenant of the League of Nations, which formed the first part of the treaty, formally endorsed the new status of the Dominions by registering Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and India as separate members of the League.

Of no less constitutional significance and of far greater practical importance was the fact that through the British Empire Delegation¹ effect was given to the views and wishes of every member of the British Commonwealth,

¹ The British Empire Delegation was in effect a Committee of the Imperial War Cabinet, sitting in Paris.

in a single co-ordinated Imperial policy. Although technically the status of the Dominions and India was no higher than the status of the score of smaller nations which waited about with little information and even less influence while the four or five great Powers decided, in actual fact they were included in the deciding Powers, for, by virtue of their membership of the British delegation, they formulated the policy which their spokesman, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, advocated in the Council of Four. They were kept in touch with all that went on; they were able to express their views at every stage. On many of the important commissions on which the Great Powers were represented, the representative of the British Empire was a Dominion Minister, and no important step was taken except after discussion and agreement at the British Empire Delegation. Thus the right of the self-governing parts of the Empire to an effective voice in foreign affairs, recognised by Britain during the war, was fully exercised at the Peace Conference.

THE DRIFT BACK

And while the Dominion representatives remained in close attendance at the heart of the Empire and were able to discuss matters daily with the British Ministers, that equality of status was a thing of substance. But when, the treaty having been signed, they returned to their distant homes, the British Foreign Office reasserted itself, and substance quickly faded to shadow, and after the break-up of the British Empire Delegation the general control of foreign policy relapsed, as we shall see, almost entirely into the hands of the British Government.

Every Government in the Empire was so urgently preoccupied with the task of reconstruction that it was practically impossible to hold a session of the Imperial Cabinet in 1920. Meanwhile, the international situation could not be left to itself. Developments of the greatest importance were maturing. The Foreign Office

took up the work. And these important developments and thousands of others have continued to mature ever since the Treaty of Versailles was signed. The Dominions have been kept informed of these far more fully than before the war, but they have not in fact had an appreciable share in shaping the foreign policy of the Empire. Although time would have permitted it to ascertain the views of the Dominions, the Home Government has frequently committed¹ the Dominions to a policy that vitally affected their welfare without consulting them. Had this action been reasonably consistent with the interests of the Empire, such lapses might pass without comment. But it has happened more than once that men who lacked the essentials of statesmanship have been admitted to control. There have been blunders and grave errors of judgment. The support of Britain has been promised to nations which did not deserve it, the Empire has been committed to a policy which imperilled its safety, and we have been brought to the very verge of war. Indiscreet negotiations with unscrupulous men have created embarrassing situations that tied the hands of the British Government and left the Dominions to face *un fait accompli* to which they were strongly opposed, which seriously menaced their interests indeed, but *un fait accompli* which they were forced to accept.

II

Two or three recent instances will show that we have not spoken in these terms without ample warrant. For the first we must go back for a moment to 1919 and the

¹ Whether the Dominions were consulted on the so-called Naval Pact with France, I do not know. Probably they were told all about it after the news had leaked out through the press. I very much doubt whether they were given an opportunity to discuss the proposals before the negotiations were completed. With the merits or demerits of the Pact I am not concerned here. But as it is obvious that the Dominions must necessarily be involved in any consequences that may arise from the Pact—or from the attempt to make one—they ought to have been consulted before anything was settled. I can hardly believe that Canada would have endorsed it.

Peace Conference. After affixing their signatures to the Treaty of Versailles, the Dominion Prime Ministers returned home, delegating other representatives of the Dominions to sign the Treaties of St. Germain and Sèvres when they were completed.

It was none too soon, for they had been abroad a very long time. They had been kept very busy dealing with the war, and finally with the peace which was to create that new world where man, purged of his iniquities, would live happily ever afterwards. Naturally all this had taken much time. All the nations of the earth, or so it seemed, had paraded before them. Age-long grievances had been remedied. The map of Europe had been redrawn. Arabia, no longer an Ishmael among the nations, had been given a king of its own, and new republics had been lavishly distributed to an emancipated world. All mankind basked in the radiant promise of eternal peace. When the Dominion Prime Ministers had left their homes, the greatest war in history was raging with horrid fury. And now a glorious vista opened before their eyes. There was to be no more war. The cooing of the dove of peace was in all men's ears. So, as they turned homewards, the Dominion representatives felt very satisfied with the results.

TROUBLE IN EGYPT

Of course it was understood that the Dominions were to be posted with detailed information of the progress of this splendid programme. Time passed; much information came to hand—generally after the press had broadcasted it over a tired and disillusioned world. It was from this latter source that, towards the end of the following year, the Dominion Governments learned with pained astonishment of trouble in Egypt. It seemed from all accounts to be rather serious. The dove of peace had fled to the Sahara. What precisely was the matter the press paragraph did not say, but it appeared that the Egyptians were greatly dissatisfied.

They, in common with all the world, wanted self-determination; instead of which they had been offered an inferior substitute. What exactly had been offered, or who had offered it, was not clear. The press report was a little vague, and the official channels of communication were as silent as the grave. But the news disturbed some of the Dominion Prime Ministers very greatly, those of Australia and New Zealand particularly. The Suez Canal is one of the gateways to Australia and New Zealand. It would certainly be very serious for these Dominions if anything interfered with or threatened the Canal. Urgent telegrams poured into the Colonial Office. The newly-won right of direct communication between the Dominion Prime Ministers and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom was exercised, and in very plain and emphatic language the Dominions demanded why they had been kept in the dark upon such an important matter. The replies from both these quarters leaving much to be desired, Australia strongly urged that a Conference be forthwith summoned, and this Britain immediately agreed to do.

How it came about that, within a few months from the time when Mr. Lloyd George had declared that the old order in which the Empire was ruled from Downing Street was gone for ever and that henceforth the Empire would rule Downing Street, the Dominions learned through the columns of the daily press that profound and far-reaching changes in Egypt had been effected, makes interesting reading, and I deal with it in another chapter.¹ It must suffice here to say that when the 1921 Conference came to discuss the question and the Dominion Prime Ministers expressed their astonishment that they should not have been informed that such radical changes in Egyptian government were contemplated, the Prime Minister of Great Britain told them that the British Government itself had no idea what was going on until it was too late to do anything except face *un fait accompli*. To put it conservatively, the

¹ "Egypt," page 172.

representatives of the Dominions were absolutely staggered by this amazing revelation of the way in which the destiny of the Empire was shaped.

On the surface it seemed perfectly incredible that such a thing could happen without the knowledge of the British Government or of any member of it, and that therefore someone in authority must have known all that was going on, and that everything done was with his approval. But the Dominion Prime Ministers were satisfied that this was not so, and that the report of the new order of things in Egypt¹ had been distinctly a shock to the British Government. The Conference discussed the question at length, and agreed upon a policy, but as it had to deal with a situation already shaped, the Conference could do nothing but follow the example of the British Government and make the best of a very bad job. It was very definitely understood, however, that this kind of thing must never happen again, and that the Dominions were to be kept fully informed of any proposed modifications of Empire and foreign policy. The representatives of the British Government most emphatically condemned what had occurred, and assured the Conference that such a regrettable incident would never recur.

THE CHANAK INCIDENT

But they were wrong. For in little more than a year we were confronted with the Chanak incident, which, although it differed from *l'affaire Zaghloul*, was even less excusable and fell clearly into the category of acts which Britain had most positively assured us would never happen again. The first intimation Australia had of the trouble was conveyed in a press telegram, from which it appeared that war impended. The official telegram confirming the communication came to hand nearly a day later. From all accounts the situation was

¹ Of course the British Government heard of the matter months before it leaked out through the press.

as bad as it well could be. The press had stated that Mr. Lloyd George had asked the Dominions to stand by Britain, and if necessary supply a contingent of troops.

From the official telegram it appeared that Britain was entirely in the right. Whether the Turks were in the wrong was not so clear. For one could not help wondering how it had come about that Greece, financially embarrassed as she notoriously was, had been able to mobilise and equip forces that would justify hopes of success against Turkey. That she had been able to do this unaided, or that anyway she would have ventured to embark upon such a campaign without the assurance of support from one of the great Powers, seemed most unlikely. And this being so, it was clear that, although the situation might have developed unexpectedly, the British Government must have seen for some time the possibilities of a war in which Britain would be involved. The assumption which the silence of the British Government seemed designed to invite, that the situation was "a bolt from the blue," seemed too great a strain upon the credulity of the Dominion Governments. It was very evident that the British authorities had known of the events leading up to the crisis; it was probable indeed that they had acquiesced in, if they had not inspired, the movements of Greek troops. Yet in the face of all that had come and gone, and despite the emphatic assurances at the 1921 Conference that the Dominions should be kept fully informed of all that happened, that they would be given every opportunity to exercise an effective influence in shaping foreign policy, that they should not again be confronted with *un fait accompli* as in *l'affaire Zaghloul*, Britain had kept the Dominions in absolute ignorance, and left them to learn through the columns of the press of a situation in which Britain had already committed herself by an ultimatum that admitted for the whole Empire no alternative but war.

The position in which the action of the British Government placed the Dominions was not only embarrassing

but deeply humiliating. That they should again be brought to the very brink of war without even knowing of the long train of events which had led to the crisis, held them up to the ridicule of a world almost deafened by their loud declarations that they were nations equal in status and authority to Great Britain. In the face of what had happened, their claim to be regarded as nations appeared only the pretentious vapourings of adolescence. Had the position been communicated through confidential channels, we should have at least been able to express our opinions freely, and possibly even to insist that the situation should be handled by the representatives of the Dominions acting with those of Britain. But the world-wide publicity given to the matter precluded this course. It was inexcusable that the Dominions should have been left to learn from the press of a crisis which had already developed to a point when war seemed to be inevitable. If a Dominion Prime Minister had acted towards a colleague in his Government in such a high-handed fashion, the Minister would have expressed his resentment by tendering his resignation. Had a Dominion Parliament been confronted with such a situation as the result of the Government's unauthorised action on a matter in which Parliament had never been consulted or even informed, it would quickly have sent the Ministry to the right-about. Yet the request of the British Government that the Dominions should not only stand by Britain, but be represented by a contingent of troops, was made public before the Dominions had received the official communication notifying them that a serious crisis existed !

To say that this savoured of sharp practice, and appeared to be a dodge to manœuvre the Dominions into a position from which there was no retreat, is not to put the matter too strongly. It certainly placed the Government of Australia in a most invidious position. The explanation given by the British Government, in response to the very strongly worded telegram sent from Melbourne, "that premature publication in the press

resulted from an unfortunate misunderstanding by the officials of the instructions of the Colonial Secretary," was entirely inadequate and really aggravated the offence. For the British Government did not deny that it had intended to release the information to the press before the Dominion Governments had had time to consider the situation in Cabinet, although publication would necessarily prevent that calm review which is the essence of representative government.

If, alternatively, the news had been given to the press without its knowledge, the British Government appeared quite unfit to control the affairs of a great Empire. In the Egyptian affair, as I have said, the Empire was irrevocably committed by someone not officially authorised by the Government to make or even suggest such proposals. In the Chanak incident, the Government alleged that some subordinate official had notified the press of a grave crisis, almost certainly involving war, before informing the Dominions.

What had happened was probably something like this. Turkey had intensely resented the provisions of the Sèvres Treaty of Peace. The situation in the Near East had become most unstable; the Young Turkish movement was growing more powerful every day; Kemal Pasha was known to have almost limitless ambitions; British interests seemed likely to be prejudiced. The natural fears and aspirations of Greece pointed to her as a useful instrument in maintaining the equilibrium. The Foreign Office, perhaps prompted, or in a way compromised, by some other department, began to direct things along the lines it desired they should go. Britain may have hoped that the situation could be adjusted by diplomatic action supported by such armed forces as Greece could supply. But Kemal Pasha proved unexpectedly stubborn. The position was one from which Britain could not recede, and the resources of diplomacy were almost exhausted—hence the ultimatum. As to whether all this was wise and prudent policy I say nothing; the point stressed is that in all these negotia-

tions and manœuvres for position Britain acted entirely upon her own initiative, and not only did not consult the Dominions, but did not inform them of what was going on. It appears as though the Foreign Office forgot all about them until war seemed probable. Then Britain let the Dominions into the secret with the rest of the world, and calmly asked them to "rally round the standard of the Empire."

III

PRESENT PRACTICE INTOLERABLE

Discouraging though these incidents may be to those who had imagined that the Dominions had at last entered into their inheritance and were taking their full share in directing the Empire's foreign affairs, they none the less threw a great deal of light on certain aspects of the problem. I have observed that our concept of foreign policy is coloured by environment, that the angle from which men view things determines the course they elect to pursue. The circumstances of the Empire vary greatly, and every part is prone to strive to mould events to serve its own ends. Although the British statesmen who have shaped the foreign policy of the Empire have on the whole acted wisely, it must often happen that, looking out upon the world from the standpoint of Britain their policy will be attuned to the circumstances of Britain, rather than the circumstances of the Empire generally. Tradition and precedent count for much in human affairs, and the British Foreign Office is perhaps a little inclined to look back rather than ahead. The statesmen of Britain have seen the world through the spectacles of British interests. Whether the Empire would fare better if representatives of the Dominions helped to mould its foreign policy we may well doubt. But that the policy would follow along different lines is reasonably certain. It might not be as wise or as prudent. But it would be different. Effective co-operation between Britain and the Dominions would react upon foreign

policy, and the attitude of the Empire towards outside nations would take another shape from that which it would have assumed if left entirely in the hands of Britain. Whether this would be good or bad for the outside world or for ourselves is a matter for speculation ; but whatever the consequences, we ought not to permit the present practice to continue. It is incompatible with the effective exercise of our self-governing powers ; it is a confession of inferiority which is, or ought to be, intolerable. To leave to others the control of matters vital to our welfare and even to our existence is a course that prudent men ought not to pursue for a moment longer than circumstances make necessary. And the change ought to be made in the interests of the Empire.

It was this question that had confronted the 1921 Conference, which made every effort to ensure that the Dominions should share effectively in shaping foreign policy. In the face of Mr. Lloyd George's declaration at the opening of that Conference, people were a little at a loss to understand how the control of foreign policy could so completely have relapsed into the hands of Britain. A great gulf between promise and performance became still more apparent from another and much more detailed and comprehensive statement dealing with the Dominions and foreign and Imperial affairs made at the conclusion of the Conference. Mr. Lloyd George, in his summary of the proceedings of the 1921 Conference, had referred to the discussions, which had covered a wide field, in these terms :

“ They revealed an absolutely unanimous opinion as to the main lines to be followed, and a very deep conviction that the whole weight of the Empire should be concentrated behind a united understanding and common action in foreign affairs. Very careful consideration was given to the means of circulating information to the Dominion Governments and keeping them in continuous touch with the conduct of foreign relations by the British Government. It was unanimously felt that the policy of the British Empire could not be adequately represen-

tative of democratic opinion throughout its peoples unless representatives of the Dominions and of India were frequently associated with those of the United Kingdom in considering and determining the course to be pursued. A resolution embodying the views of the Conference declares that the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and the Dominions and the representatives of India should aim at meeting annually or at such longer periods as may prove feasible.

"The existing practices of direct communication between the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and the Dominions as well as the right of the latter to represent them in consultation with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom are maintained."

The right of direct communication between the Prime Ministers of the different parts of the Empire—an innovation introduced during the war—was the natural corollary of including all Prime Ministers as *ex-officio* members of the Imperial Cabinet. It was a step along the road towards complete emancipation from that control of the Colonial Office which was a survival of the old "Colonial days"—a control quite incompatible with the present status of the great Dominions.

The resolution of the 1921 Conference that annual meetings were desirable was a pious aspiration rather than an order of procedure to be followed, and the 1923 and 1926 Conferences in this matter left things as they found them. We see therefore that although the right of the Dominions to share in moulding foreign policy has been conceded, and several Imperial Conferences have in fact discussed foreign policy at length, laying down the general principles which are to govern Empire policy towards foreign Governments, and applying these principles to the more important questions that presented themselves at the time the Conferences were sitting, one can scarcely remark any substantial change in pre-war practice. For in essentials, subject to the reservations made above, the control of the policy upon which the future of all the Dominions depends, the policy by which

their domestic policy is, or may be, conditioned, is for all practical purposes as completely in the hands of Britain as it was before August 1914.

We have gone as far as we can go by declarations of equality of status. When in a confederation of nations all are admitted to be equal in status and to have equal rights in the government of the Empire, it does not appear that words can take us any farther. The Government of Great Britain not only admits that the right of the Dominions to shape foreign policy is as clear and full as its own, but invites them to exercise that right. But for reasons, to some of which I have already referred, they have not been able to do this. In the following sections I propose to examine the position closely to see why that is so.

PARTY POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY

I

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES ALLIED

We have seen that the line of demarcation between domestic and foreign policy is vague and uncertain, that just as the sea in its restless ambition encroaches on the land here, and is in its turn pushed back elsewhere, so the domestic policy of one nation reacts upon others, compelling them to readjust their policy to changed conditions. The complexity of modern civilisation makes the task of government extremely difficult, particularly with such an enormous organisation as the British Empire. To the outside world the Empire is one nation; to the countries that compose it it is a Commonwealth of Free Nations, each having complete and unlimited powers of self-government, and each, in that wide and vague field of domestic affairs, acting without consulting the others. Each is a law unto itself; there is no co-ordinating authority. But while each part does as it pleases, the responsibility for any consequences that may follow from the acts of any one all may well have to share. Each may

involve all in war. Because of its position in the Empire the policy of Britain reacts upon every part of the Empire much more profoundly than the policy of any of the other nations that compose it. We shall be better able to understand the complexity of the problems we are analysing if we consider for a few moments the way in which the government of Britain is carried on.

THE "DEUS EX MACHINA"

Britain is to-day a democracy. The people rule. The foreign policy of Britain is now directly under their control. Since the Government depends upon a majority in the House of Commons, which in turn reflects the opinion of the British people, it follows that British policy, domestic and foreign, must adjust itself to the changing opinions of the people, the ever-varying nuances of feeling for this project and that people, as these changes are reflected in the press, on platform, and in by-elections. Constantly this change involves the setting up of new Governments with different views of foreign policy from those held by their predecessors. Or a Government may see as a result of a very decided expression of public opinion the wisdom of changing its views. The foreign policy of Britain a year hence may be very different from what it is to-day. Whether it changes or remains the same is for the electors of Britain to decide.

Similarly the foreign policy of the United States is what the people of that country determine it shall be. If the United States has not joined the League of Nations, if it has, after taking an unconscionable time to make up its mind, at last timidly ventured into the World-Court, it is because the American people have so decided.

As I have said, the term "domestic policy" covers many matters which may vitally affect international relations. If the attitude of the people of the United Kingdom towards a fiscal change has been influenced by a fear lest protection of British industries should

offend other nations, that is their own business, and we in the Dominions ought not to complain. But the relations between the various parts of the Empire are *sui generis*; if the policy of Britain leads to war, all are involved, although in the making of that policy none was consulted or even considered. And for this there is no remedy. Britain is clearly entitled to govern herself as she thinks fit. She may bring herself to the brink of ruin by inaction or unwise legislation; she may pursue a weak policy that earns the contempt of foreign nations, or a provocative policy that invites reprisals. Foreign nations may protest, and these protests may, if unheeded, be followed by hostilities, but the Dominions can do nothing. They may perhaps venture to point out the effects of the present or the proposed policy upon their trade, upon the well-being of the Empire; but as they insistently demand the right to govern themselves and would resent very strongly any interference from Britain, they are prevented from doing more.

From this it is obvious that since the acts and policy of Britain, whether domestic or foreign, react upon the whole Empire and may involve it in war, and since British policy is continually adjusting itself to changing circumstances as interpreted by the political party dominant at the moment, the control of our destiny is taken from our own hands, and we are carried here and there by the swirling tides of British party politics.

The need for one foreign policy for the Empire is obvious, but how is it to be ensured in these circumstances? The position of the Dominions is intolerable. We do not deal here with hypotheses, but with what has happened and in all human probability will happen again.

II

BRITAIN'S POLITICAL DIVISIONS

To-day in Britain the people are divided into two great camps: in one are those who believe that nothing

will go well until Labour rules; the other is most devoutly convinced that the only hope for Britain is to keep Labour out of office. Each party has a right and a left wing. The ideal of the extreme right of the Conservative Party, though its members do not openly declare it, is "government by the few," and that few recruited from the modern representatives of the feudal system—men born to a certain estate and educated in certain schools and universities. This class has ruled England for centuries, and on the whole has ruled it well enough. It believes in a strong foreign policy and an Empire great, powerful, and united—but above all an Empire governed by men of its own class. And while it talks a great deal about Empire and stands for the Empire, the creed of its heart is England and English institutions; its concept of Empire is one in which Britain is the overlord, and this class its rulers. The moderate Conservative, although he does not unreservedly accept these views, leans towards them.

On the other hand, the extreme left wing of the Labour Party is frankly Communist, or if, as a result of the recent conference, not openly so, then silently, fanatically working for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. These men are internationalists. A great, prosperous, and powerful Empire not only does not appeal to them, but from their point of view is the great obstacle to the realisation of their ideals. They are British only by accident of birth; they have no pride in the achievements of their country, and raise their voices on its behalf only when suggestions for the promotion of Empire trade development are made. They want to see neither a powerful, prosperous England, nor a great, united Empire. They live for one thing and for one thing only—the fostering of class-hatred in preparation for the class-war.

The mass of the rank and file of the Labour Party, although sipping from the poisoned cup which the Reds proffer them, do not share these views except in a modified form. But the moderates lack cohesion and the

demoniac energy that drives the fanatic to the accomplishment of his life-work.¹ Undeniably there is a gulf between the policies of these two parties of the United Kingdom. In domestic and foreign affairs they are antithetical.

Though the British people are generally most conservative, the life of political parties ebbs and flows, the pendulum swings, and, we know, at times swings violently. Parties, whose every act the cable chorus has a thousand times assured us to have been redolent of the subtle blend of wisdom, vision, courage, foresight, and prudence that has marked British statesmanship throughout the ages, on appealing to the people are crushed to pulp and emerge a pathetic caricature of their former greatness. In their stead stand their opponents, full of quiet dignity, taking upon their shoulders the crushing burden of office and calmly announcing to a slightly bewildered Empire their intention to reverse their predecessors' foreign and domestic policy. These gentlemen, but yesterday little better than bandits, have now become British statesmen, and so our rulers! The King is dead! Long live the King!

DOMINIONS' ABSURD SITUATION

Even when the Dominions are able to exercise their right to an effective voice in the Empire's foreign policy—which for various reasons we know they have generally not been able to do—what is their position if, having agreed to certain general principles and a definite line of policy in Europe or elsewhere, they find themselves confronted with a new Government in Britain whose concept of foreign policy is fundamentally different from that of their predecessors?

But consider a situation much worse, and, on the basis of our experience, quite possible. Suppose, as is usual, that they have been told what is to be done when

¹ For the moment the extremists appear to have suffered a reverse. This may be only temporary.

it is too late to do more than to enter a formal and belated protest against it, and to complain that they have been ignored. Thus consulted they would stand committed to a policy before the whole world. What, then, if the Government responsible for that policy is defeated and the Treasury benches occupied by men who, having denounced that policy, are pledged to an entirely different one? The Dominion Governments would be exposed to the ridicule and contempt of the world as men who, having declared themselves for one policy, find those responsible, at whose instigation they lent certain action the weight of their approval, repudiated by the people of England and sent to the right-about. The new Government informs the Dominions of its intentions. It may perhaps ask them if they agree with their proposals; but whether they do or not matters little. In practice the Dominions are compelled to eat their words and curse to-day that policy which but yesterday they had gilded with eulogy. It is indeed difficult to reconcile such complete and servile dependence upon the vagaries of British party politics with the boasted equality of status between the Dominions and Britain.

We have already referred to the Chanak incident. The trouble with Turkey, which seemed likely to fan the dying embers of war into a new, engrossing conflagration, occurred during the last few weeks of the Lloyd George régime. The Dominions, not previously consulted, were asked to support the attitude of Britain, and, if the need arose, to supply troops to enforce the ultimatum Britain had issued. This some of the Dominions had pledged themselves to do; the others, marking time, awaited developments and an opportunity to bring the matter before their Parliaments. Before the situation cleared up, the Lloyd George Government was turned out of office, and the new administration, although it did not openly repudiate the policy of its predecessor, showed that it held other views. The Governments of those Dominions which had supported

the Lloyd George policy, notwithstanding that they strongly resented the manner in which the negotiations leading up to the ultimatum had been carried on, had to readjust themselves to the altered position.

Again, when an unexpected turn of the wheel put Mr. Baldwin out of office and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald became Prime Minister, the foreign policy of Britain underwent some very serious sympathetic changes. Amongst other things we may mention the attitude of Britain towards the Soviet Government and its sponsorship of the Protocol. As Mr. MacDonald did not have a majority of his own, his flights were circumscribed. Even so, he nested with some strange and ill-conditioned fowls. His recognition of the Soviet may have had much to recommend it, but in the eyes of many people in the Dominions it appeared a revolutionary and disastrous step. Yet the Dominions, although they did not formally ratify the policy, were committed to the train of effects that must have followed it.

THE PROTOCOL

Had Mr. MacDonald remained in office, his enthusiastic advocacy of the Protocol would have forced upon the Dominions a project which many regarded not only as Utopian but a menace to the unity and safety of the Empire. If Mr. MacDonald had not been dependent upon the support of the Liberals, there is no reason to doubt that he would have forced the Protocol down the throat of the Empire. Britain is committed to the Locarno Pact. Whether the Pact is better than the Protocol as a means of preserving world-peace is a matter of opinion, but that its scope and objective as well as its effect are widely different from those of the Protocol is not open to argument. If Mr. MacDonald had induced the House of Commons to accept the new scheme, the step would have had a profound and possibly most serious reaction upon the Dominions. Suppose that Britain had ratified the Protocol and the Dominions

had abstained from doing so, as probably they would have done—how would the Empire have been situated?

The Dominions would have been committed to a policy the very antithesis of that pursued to-day. The foundations upon which they rest would have been undermined. Just what the position of the British Navy would have been under the Protocol is not clear. But that it would have remained as it is now, ready to help the Dominions whenever they needed help, is more than doubtful. Some of the protagonists of the Protocol contended that the British Navy would not be at the disposal of the League. But surely they do not expect us to believe that the Protocol could effectively restrain nations from going to war and compel obedience to the decisions of the League or World-Court unless it had adequate force behind it. And where would that force come from if not from the signatories of the Protocol? Even supposing that the League could not dispose of the British Navy without the consent of Britain, could Britain, a signatory of the Protocol, use its Navy to fight the forces endeavouring to compel obedience to the League decisions? Supposing the League decided that the "White Australia" policy was opposed to the best interests of the world at large, and Australia declined to admit the coloured peoples, would she be left to fight her own battles or could she call upon Britain for aid as she can now? Or would the League expect that Britain should help to enforce its decrees? Anyway, it is obvious that if the Protocol was something more than a mere "scrap of paper," it would mean the end of the Empire.

The Protocol was the thin edge of the wedge of internationalism. It was inconsistent with the concept of the British Empire and the relations which must continue to exist between the Parliaments of the Empire. Yet the Protocol played a negligible part in the defeat of the MacDonald Government. And of course it was not before the electors when the defeat of Mr. Baldwin put Mr. MacDonald into office.

It is clear, then, that the Empire can be committed,

not only to any policy approved by the British people, but also to one upon which they have never expressed any clear or definite opinion, and that in either event the Dominions have no option but to accept whatever consequences—even war or disintegration—may flow from this policy.

III

AN INEVITABLE EVIL

And although this evil may be mitigated, it cannot be cured. Imperial Federation would not prove a panacea even if the Dominions agreed to it—which they most emphatically will not—for party government is fast rooted in the depths of human nature. Schemes for placing foreign policy, by which the whole Empire is affected, outside British party politics are likely to receive short shrift, for the good and sufficient reason that foreign policy is an integral part of British politics, affecting the economic, social, and political lives of the people. The British elector is not going to hand over the control of matters vitally affecting him and his country to any body over which he has not complete control. And this is true, too, of the electors of the Dominions.

Party politics are very often denounced. Their shortcomings are obvious, but they fit in with the nature of man. Man is a partisan ; conflict with fists, weapons, or words is the salt which flavours the monotony of his daily life. He is gregarious, so tends to fight in groups. If this be denied him, he will war against his fellow-tribesmen or comrade in the same group as himself. In political combats he is not so much concerned to achieve his purpose as to prevent his opponents from achieving theirs. Even coalition Governments are very seldom popular or last for any length of time. The people tolerate them only under exceptional circumstances, as when the nation is at war or when neither party is strong enough to govern by itself.

The people, when an appeal is made to them upon

clear-cut issues and upon a definite policy, expect a party returned with a majority to give effect to that policy. They would never tolerate a Government composed of men who had held opposite views on the issue submitted at the election. If the majority is not to rule, who is? When the majority has spoken decisively against recognition of the Soviet, for example, is the voice of the minority to prevail and the Soviet to be recognised? For if it prevented the policy approved by the majority being carried into effect, it would prevail. Nothing could be more futile than to make a policy which its advocates declared to be vital to the welfare of the nation an issue at an election if only unanimity could ensure that it would be adopted. For were unanimity possible, an appeal would be hardly necessary.

Anyway, we are not concerned with hypotheses. If it be contended that a *modus vivendi* between the rival parties is a remedy for the evils of party government in foreign affairs which affect the whole Empire, the answer is, that when people hold decided views, believing that a certain policy is essential to the welfare of the community, any *modus vivendi* not imposed by *force majeure* will be condemned as cowardly surrender. Besides, good government is firm government—and firm government is impossible when Governments are things of threads and patches. Wise legislation and firm, just, and capable administration are incompatible with divided control and with a personnel made up of men who hold widely divergent concepts of social and economic progress.

Party government, with all its faults, works; it provides the machinery by which the majority can translate its will into law. In domestic policy it is a fairly efficient, most sensitive, most adaptable instrument of democratic government. But in the wide, ill-defined domain of the British Empire's foreign affairs it is capable of developments entirely incompatible with that equality of status which is not the recognised basis of Imperial foreign policy. But what is the alternative? It is a tangled skein, and in the hands of a people less richly

endowed with the genius for self-government the prospects of unravelling it would be negligible.

But the tangle looks far worse than it really is. Set down in black and white, Empire relations appear so hopelessly illogical and inconsistent that we are not astonished that people of other nations regard them as a sort of Chinese puzzle. Sentiment, tradition, habit, common interests, mutual forbearance, wise restraint, are the lubricants that make the wheels of Empire machinery go round—at times with some creaking, but for the most part smoothly enough. At the same time we should recognise that growth involves, increasingly, complexity. The last century has brought great changes; the Colonies have become Dominions—the Dominions nations. Sometimes Britain seems to forget this. She is entitled to govern herself as she pleases, the British electors to change their Governments as and when they wish. But if in exercising their right to do these things they limit the rights of the Dominions or place them in a false position, they must realise they are gravely imperilling the unity of the Empire, and this, of course, applies to the Dominions also. They are free to pass what laws they please, to pursue whatever policy they deem will best serve their own interests. They are masters in their own households as Britain is in hers. But a united Empire—the rock upon which the Temple of their Freedom rests—is only possible as long as they act with wise restraint. And the more they know of Britain and the more Britain knows of them, the more they will be likely to exercise this restraint, which for the free nations of the British Commonwealth is the beginning and end of wisdom.

THE RESIDENT MINISTER

I

From time to time we hear suggestions ingenious and attractive that point the way by which the Dominions may achieve an effective voice in foreign policy. Some of these, the heroic kind, would cure the disease but kill the

patient—Imperial Federation, for example ; others, compatible though they are with the two great principles upon which the Commonwealth of Nations rests—autonomy of the parts and unity of the whole—would be ineffective because they do not go to the root of the trouble.

During the discussion on Empire relations at the 1921 Cabinet, it was suggested that the Dominions should be represented by a Resident Minister in London. This Minister would keep closely in touch with the Foreign Office, attend Cabinet meetings when Empire questions were to be discussed, keep his Government posted on everything that went on, and put its views before the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom or the Cabinet if opportunity presented itself. The suggestion was not new, having, in fact, been made during the second session of the 1918 War Cabinet, when the Cabinet resolved that :

“ In order to secure continuity in the work of the Imperial War Cabinet, and a permanent means of consultation during the war on the more important questions of common interest, the Prime Minister of each Dominion has the right to nominate a Cabinet Minister either as a resident or visitor in London to represent him at meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet, to be held regularly between the Plenary Sessions.”

Rooted in the same soil is the proposal to establish a Dominion Secretariat who would have access to the Foreign Office and presumably take up official quarters there. The duty of the Secretariat would be to keep the Resident Minister (or the Dominion Government, or both) in close touch with all matters that affect the interests of the Dominion.

Something may be said for the Resident Minister and the Secretariat, but that in themselves they would fail to ensure the Dominions the effective voice in foreign affairs to which they are entitled will be quite clear if we recall the political circumstances of the different Governments of the Empire and their relations *inter se*.

In Britain and in every one of the Dominions, control of Government by the people is firmly established. The dependence of these Governments upon their respective Parliaments and the people who elect them is as absolute as their independence of all authority outside. The Canadian Parliament can make any law it pleases for Canada, but, of course, cannot legislate for any other Dominion. And although, technically, the Parliament of Britain can make laws for the Dominions, in practice it has long ceased to exercise this power and legislates only for the people of Britain and of those other portions of the British Empire which do not yet enjoy full powers of self-government.

The Government of each Dominion always remains in that Dominion. That is true of Britain also. Each Government is responsible to its own Parliament and the people who elect it, and to no other. The Government of Canada cannot take instructions from the Government of Britain any more than it can take instructions from the Government of Australia. There is no overlord to whom all are responsible or subordinate. If a Dominion Prime Minister goes to Britain to attend the Imperial Conference, he does not take the Government of his Dominion with him. He remains the head of his Government. He is the most important man in the Government. His influence is greater than the influence of any of his colleagues, but they carry on the work of governing the country during his absence. In 1911, for example, Mr. Fisher went to the Imperial Conference, and took with him two of the senior members of the Ministry. During his absence neither he nor either of his two colleagues took any part whatever in the Government of Australia, although they were kept in touch with what was being done. And this applied to foreign as well as domestic affairs.

It so happened that the agenda of the Imperial Conference contained a matter of first importance—the Declaration of London—which provided for radical changes in the law upon the capture and search of enemy

goods on neutral ships. The Cabinet had not discussed the matter before the Prime Minister's departure, but having had its attention directed to the treaty, it considered the proposal, decided that such a change was undesirable, and cabled Mr. Fisher, instructing him to oppose it. And in 1916, 1918, 1919, and 1921, during my absence, my colleagues carried on the government of Australia in Australia. And they dealt not only with domestic matters, but with those questions quite definitely within the ambit of the very important Imperial and foreign affairs which specially engaged the War Cabinet, the British delegation at Paris, and, after the war, the Imperial Conference in 1921.

DOMINION REPRESENTATIVES' POWERS ABROAD

When the Dominion Prime Ministers meet to confer upon the Empire and foreign policy, they sit, therefore, as delegates who speak on the questions submitted for consideration from the angle of the part of the Empire they represent. They have authority to represent their Governments, but not to bind them unless specifically authorised to do so. But the Prime Minister of a Dominion at an Imperial Conference, while he cannot commit his Government, has a very definite status. His influence is considerable. A Resident Minister, however, could be no more than an Ambassador. His usefulness would depend entirely upon what manner of man he was. No matter how able he might be, he would not dare to commit his Government, and he would commit it if he voted. In practice he would not vote unless instructed to do so. But if he were promptly instructed, would not this work well enough? Yes, it would work, but not well. To instruct a delegate how to vote on a question without hearing it argued gives no room for the play of that spirit of compromise which is the secret of successful self-government.

The Dominions would not allow their Resident Ministers to commit them without consultation, and it would

not be easy to get the Dominions' opinion without a delay that would often endanger the Empire. When the Dominion Parliaments are in recess, Ministers scatter all over their vast domains. To assemble them frequently takes many days. But even when assembled, what will they do? They will be most reluctant to decide important matters about which they realise they know little or nothing, since they will have to shoulder full responsibility for their decisions. As things are, they can take the credit when affairs go right, and, disclaiming all responsibility when they miscarry, can say to their respective Parliaments, "Britain has done this thing; thy servant had no hand in it!"

Then, too, Parliament would wish to review whatever action the Resident Minister had taken. It would ask what recommendations he had made on this or that question, and whether the Cabinet had accepted, and if not, why?

If peradventure the Resident Minister had played for safety and done nothing, his unhappy colleagues would be compelled to put their imaginations on the rack to justify this miserable evasion of his plain duty—for which, of course, they would be responsible, whether they had been consulted or not. And, having only the vaguest notion of the complex tangle of foreign affairs, they would find the justification of action and inaction most difficult.

II

COMPLICATIONS IN LONDON

We see the weakness of the plan even more clearly when we look at it from the opposite angle. Suppose these Ministers appointed. There would be four or five of them; presumably each great Dominion would have its own Minister with an equality of status and enjoying the same privileges, and each would expect to receive copies of all the important Foreign Office telegrams and dispatches and to have access directly or

through his Secretariat to every communication from and to the Foreign Office. The number of these is most formidable—dispatches, reports, telegrams; some more interesting than others, but all dealing with affairs that may, by a turn of the wheel, prove vital.

If these Ministers are to be of the slightest use, they must read and endeavour to understand all. Each must keep in close touch with his own country, yet see it in proper perspective against the background of the Empire and of the world generally. He must note the veiled threats, the hints of hostile action—not necessarily or usually warlike—that menace the trade, industry, or other vital interest of any part of the Empire, and ascertain what action, if any, the Foreign Secretary proposed to take in any contingency, and if he does not agree with the Foreign Secretary's view, must endeavour to persuade him to change his plans.

In Cabinet meetings the Resident Ministers would be mere delegates—pawns on the vast chess-board of world-politics, moved here and there by those who played the game without seeing the board. No doubt the Resident Minister's recommendations would be considered, but usually they would not count for very much. Frequently the Dominion Government would not have time to review the position in the light of the Resident Minister's communications and come to a decision. Even if it were able to do so, the situation might have changed in the interval. The world would not wait while Ministers, scattered over a country nearly as large as Europe, assembled, lengthily discussed, and came to a decision—a decision which perhaps would differ widely from the decisions of the other Dominions. The Resident Minister would have to cable Ottawa or Pretoria, or Canberra or Wellington, news of the stormy doings in Archangel or the Balkans. But well he would know how little his masters cared to learn how affairs moved in those far-off places, and that probably his effusions would be impatiently scorned and pigeonholed. Thus he would find himself on the horns of a dilemma. Should

he send a tame, lifeless, and uninspiring précis—or, realising that the story thus torn from its setting must fall flat upon the ears of those unfamiliar with the facts that have led up to the position, set out the moving tale of doings in many lands in the very words of the chief characters ?

WHAT MOVEMENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT ?

Who is to say at the moment how vast are to be the ramifications of a seemingly most innocent act in a most remote country ? The Resident Minister, considering the assassination of a Grand Duke and Duchess at Serajevo or the Belgian Treaty of Neutrality, could hardly be quite sure that his Government may not accuse him of frivolity if he reports it as a circumstance likely to interest the statesmen of the Empire. As he contemplates the long message intended to convince his chief that he is very much on the alert, a tireless worker in the interests of his country, he will disturbingly wonder how his Government will regard these long and most expensive telegrams which it is his bounden duty to dispatch daily, or, sometimes, more frequently. Will they think they are getting value for their money ? Unless our Resident Minister should happen by rare chance to hit upon events that shape themselves so that the influence of the Dominions may seem to have plucked peace from the jaws of war, he will soon find his Government complaining of expense and urging him to confine his attention to matters in which the Dominion is directly interested, or matters likely to create war. But, as we have already pointed out, that is the trouble.

Not every communication creates a dispute, not every dispute involves a war. Every communication from the representative of another nation or dispatch or telegram from its own agents telling of something done or in contemplation is potentially a dispute, however, and every dispute has within it the seeds of war, needing only suitable conditions to grow and blossom.

And generally no man is able to say which is grain and which is chaff.

III

DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNICATION

Whether the Resident Minister sent much or little or whether his colleagues were guided by or ignored his advice is only one and not the most important side of this question. Presumably the Resident Minister is intended to be something more than a sort of corresponding clerk. He would represent his Dominion at Cabinet meetings to which he had been summoned. Let us assume that the principal reason for summoning the Cabinet is the situation created by a very recent and unexpected development in Europe, and that a declaration of the attitude of Britain is urgent. Whether the Resident Ministers were in London or not, this would be necessary. The press might call the Cabinet an Imperial Cabinet, but it would remain a meeting of the Cabinet of Britain to which the Resident Ministers had been invited. Some may contend that their presence would alter things materially. It might do so, if opinions at the Cabinet were divided. But such a contingency is most remote, for members of the British Cabinet summoned to the meeting would support the views of the Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Let us consider the procedure. Presumably the Foreign Secretary will make a statement. Usually he has discussed the question with the Prime Minister previously, and the policy suggested by him is the policy in which his chief concurs. But before a decision is made, the question is open for debate. The representatives of the Dominions are invited to express their opinions. They may have had time to communicate with their Governments and receive their instructions. This is, however, unlikely. If they are without instructions, there are three courses open to them.

(a) They may ask that the matter be postponed until

their Governments can have an opportunity to discuss the matter and express an opinion ;

(b) They may take the risk of approving the policy recommended by the Foreign Secretary and supported by the Prime Minister ; or

(c) They may decide to oppose it.

If the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary declare that delay is dangerous, an appeal for a postponement will fail. And whether he supports or opposes the policy advocated by the Foreign Secretary, the Resident Minister is equally in danger of being condemned by his Government. He will be told very plainly that his business is to keep his Government fully informed on all questions of interest and advise promptly when any developments take place, but not to commit it by his vote or by his silence unless so instructed. Of course he may be told in a particular debate to exercise his discretion, but this will happen seldom, and never on questions that his Government deem important.

Again, it may happen that some of the Resident Ministers will agree to support a certain line of policy while others will not. What, then, will be the position of Dominion Governments when all are directly represented and will be bound by decisions arrived at by the majority, and so estopped from disclaiming responsibility as they can do now ?

The position of Resident Minister in such circumstances will not be enviable, and where the policy is to be publicly proclaimed and his attitude immediately exposed to criticism he will feel most uncomfortable. It may be said that this occurs at the Imperial Conferences attended by the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, but that is not so. There is a vast difference between discussion and agreement upon general principles and the application of these principles to circumstances as they arise. And this discloses one of the chief defects of the proposal. It is well enough in its way, but it does not go very far, and for this reason. The men who demand the right to an effective voice in foreign policy are many

thousands of miles away from the place where the question is being argued out. All that the Resident Minister can do is to supply them with information and to carry out their instructions by voting and acting as they desire.

Many of the difficulties that have hitherto denied the Dominions having an effective voice in shaping foreign policy spring from the necessity for immediate decision. Let us say, for example, that a note has to be drafted immediately for presentation to an Embassy of a foreign Power, or arrangements made for a meeting between the Foreign Secretary and the Ambassador of the country interested. Every word, written or spoken, has to be most carefully chosen; the effect of this or that phrase upon the mind of the recipient, who is, or ought to be, well enough known to the Foreign Secretary or to his chief advisers, must be considered. War or peace may depend not only upon the terms, but upon the tone of the note, and it is clear that if the Resident Minister is to be of service to his Dominion, he should be consulted, or at least informed, at every stage of the negotiations. Or, again, perhaps the Government may consider a public declaration of policy the best means of dealing with the situation. Whatever action is necessary must be taken promptly—an hour's delay may involve most serious consequences. Political and diplomatic situations often develop rapidly. What is easy in the morning becomes difficult in the afternoon and impossible at night.

How inexpressibly complex the already intricate situation would become if five Resident Ministers, zealous of their nations' privileges, held up the business from time to time while they communicated with their Governments and endeavoured to have inserted in the note or the declaration of policy their various instructions—probably incompatible with each other and with the British Government's notion of what should be done!

Consider, too, how futile the whole thing would become if the Dominions were represented by mediocre men. To know when to act and when to wait—apparently

unheedful but keenly vigilant—and when the moment for action comes to strike swiftly, is the rarest of gifts, predicating in those who possess it deep knowledge of human nature, a well-stored mind, sound judgment, great tact and courage. Men with these rare qualities do not grow on every bush, and when native ability must be buttressed by long training, the sphere of choice becomes still more restricted. Only rarely and by sheer good fortune would the Dominions find men at once qualified and willing to accept the position. The ideal men would generally prefer to play their parts on the more familiar stage of Dominion affairs. The mediocrity, especially if he were supported at the seat of Government by other mediocrities, might do more to wreck the Empire than ignorance of foreign affairs in the Dominions would do.

Shorn of its glamour, the office would have little to recommend it. Its tenure would be precarious. If the Government of which he was a member were defeated, the Resident Minister would be recalled. Anyway, unless he was a mere bird of passage, the Resident Minister of one of the more distant Dominions would soon find his advice ignored and his reputation in the Parliament and in the country debased, and he could do little to put himself right. He would have got out of touch with public opinion in the Dominion. He would be too remote from the people he represented. The affairs with which he would have to concern himself daily are not of the kind likely to keep his memory fresh in their minds. When his advice was taken and things chanced to go wrong, the Government would see that the blame rested upon its shoulders. When things went right—as of course they generally would do—the Government would take all the credit. They would be in touch with the Parliament and with the constituencies, he would be half a world away. If he complained of their treatment, his colleagues could make his position intolerable and force him to resign.

The representative of Canada could put his case before

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the people, but the representatives of Australia, New Zealand, or even South Africa could not. Many weeks would elapse before they could reach their own countries. By that time public interest in the matter would probably have frozen. If not, his late colleagues would have had too long a start of him.

COMMUNICATIONS

I

Obviously, then, such devices as Resident Ministers, although not valueless, would fail in themselves to keep the various Governments working together on such mutually important matters as foreign affairs. They do not touch the real difficulty, which arises from the fact that the several Governments whose views on the changing aspects of foreign affairs it is sought to reconcile and fuse into a common policy are separated from one another by thousands of miles of land and sea. If Ottawa and Canberra were as close to London as are Paris and Brussels, Resident Ministers could help materially to make the machinery of Empire Government run smoothly. But as things are, these Ministers would be too far from their respective Dominions to express with certitude or promptness the views of their Governments, and until we overcome the natural barrier of distance, such expedients can be but little more than ceremonious embroidery to Empire government.

NERVES OF THE EMPIRE

Communications are to States what the nervous and vascular systems are to living organisms. Plato laid it down that States might increase to any size compatible with their unity. And the Greeks, who neglected communications, were never able to unite except for brief periods under the spur of desperate necessity. But the Romans, an eminently practical people, and the great roadmakers of antiquity, built up an Empire which

united under their rule the greater part of the known world. Even so, the means of communication then available limited the Roman Empire, and only the centralised system of government, which lent to the word of Cæsar the force of law wherever the Roman eagles had been planted, made possible its unity.

The relations between Rome and the various parts of her vast Empire were in substance the relations between master and slave. One authority directed all things without consulting or much regarding the welfare of any except its own. There was indeed no need for discussion, for a master does not argue with a slave. But simple though this policy was, it could not sustain the weight of the Empire, the area of which at the height of its splendour did not extend to one-fifth of the area we comprehend as the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The problems of Empire government are practical problems. They arise out of the geographical and political circumstances of the Empire. Declarations of Rights, resolutions of Conferences, appointments of new kinds of representatives or of new official departments, leave the position essentially unaltered. In one way and one way only can the various Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations exercise more effectively their rights to mould and direct the policy upon which the well-being and safety of the Empire depend—by improvements in communication.

The British Empire, scattered over all the globe, could not have existed except in an age of which marvellous improvements in communication is one of the outstanding achievements. Where its development has outstripped these, or purblind statesmanship has failed to make the best available, trouble, more or less serious, has arisen. The vast body of the Empire can be nourished, its complex system co-ordinated and made to live only through most highly organised and efficient means of communication—and these are at hand or rapidly evolving. We are bridging the vast distances which divide the capital cities of the Empire, and what we would have thought

miracles a few years ago have become commonplace. The improvements in communications have gone far beyond the anticipations of the scientists.

When the 1921 Conference discussed the question of communications, experts condemned direct wireless communication between England and Australia as Utopian,¹ yet to-day it is a fact. We can put a girdle around the earth in one-seventh part of a fleeting second, and London can call Canberra in half that time. Tomorrow or within six or twelve months' time people in London will be able to converse with their friends in the capital cities of the Empire, and before long to see them. And in this way our feet are set upon a road along which we must travel far, for upon closer association of all its peoples depends the unity of the Empire.

OUR INTRICATE GOVERNMENT

But the problems that confront the Empire arise also from its system of government. The polity of the Roman Empire demanded no more than that Cæsar should hear of everything of moment that happened throughout the Empire, and that in turn his will should be made known to all. If a province proved refractory, the Legions were despatched to compel its obedience. Throughout the Roman Empire there was, until it broke asunder through its unwieldiness, only one Cæsar. But in the British Empire there are many, all equal in status, although, as we have observed, not in stature, and all jealously insisting upon their right to be consulted.

In modern times the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and French have ruled over wide areas of territory in distant

¹ Only Australia withheld from the scheme for linking the Empire by a chain of expensive high-powered stations. I felt confident that science would shortly evolve a method which would eliminate costly reduplication of messages by enabling Australia to speak with any part of the world direct. The Beam system justified my optimism, at the moment ridiculed by those who presumably should have known better: vide 1921 Conference debates.

lands. But none of these has attempted the novel experiment in government which has been developing in the British Empire during the last half-century. Modern France has a great colonial Empire which in area is not much inferior to Rome at its zenith. She rules much in the same way. Throughout the French overseas Empire the people live as subject races. It is true that one or two forlorn figures, representatives of Algiers and Morocco (?), sit in the Chamber of Deputies. But Paris gives the law to all, and enforces obedience when necessary at the point of the bayonet.

In the modern world communications are important to all nations, but to those grouped in the British Empire they are absolutely vital. It is very obvious that the means of communication adequate for an Empire so vast as ours, were it ruled by one authority whose right to direct no one questioned, must prove entirely inadequate where many authorities all equal to each other claim the right to be consulted before action is taken.

Obviously, then, the cure of many pains, the solution of many problems, the antidote for many misunderstandings, is to bring the peoples of the Empire into closer touch with one another. Lack of knowledge in affairs is as disastrous as lack of vitamins in food—deprived of information about each other, the organs of this vast commonwealth must stumble from the rhythm of health. Amply informed, they will inevitably move together with an invigorating unanimity. Misunderstanding grows from ignorance, and if we bind the people of the Empire more closely together by more rapid and economical transport and better methods of communication, we will demonstrate to them that Britishers in Canada, in Hong-Kong, in Egypt, in South Africa, are not noticeably different from themselves, but rather share the same ambitions and desires. In this way we will draw together the peoples at present widely scattered, in a mass welded by the consciousness of their mutual interdependence as securely as the people of a city are welded by their associations, possessions, and communal prides.

II

I remarked in the preface that the manner in which the Empire has grown seems to suggest a guiding hand, leading a people, ignorant of its purpose but responsive to its promptings, through struggles, defeats, and triumphs to an incomparably richer heritage. Events have been shaped marvellously to fit our Imperial destiny, and with each step forward the widening horizon has revealed the means by which we have been able to make good our hold and deal with the new problems change and growth have tangled about our feet.

This was never more abundantly evident than at the moment. The problems which confront the Empire to-day are novel and most complex, and had they arisen in their present form fifty or even twenty-five years ago they would have baffled every attempt to solve them. The Empire has grown faster than its nervous and vascular systems.

That, fundamentally, is why in practice the control of foreign policy has remained in the hands of Britain, why neither Resident Ministers nor Secretaries will ensure to the Dominions an effective voice in these affairs. Unless and until we extend and stimulate our system of communications, the most ingenious schemes to govern the Empire, to divide equally the administration of the great, intricate problems upon which depends the safety of each individual under its flag, must leave things as they are. But that is the very situation in which they cannot remain for long. We must go on, or go down. We cannot afford to indulge in mere pretentious display ; we cannot leave the status of the Dominions embalmed in odorous but perfectly useless words.

Somehow we must bring each distinct part of the Empire into a common rhythmic movement. Unity is not merely essential to the Empire : it is the Empire. But that unity must be the unity of a living body, not of a wax model, complete and decorative, but static. We must move.

The fact that the nations which compose it recognise that they are parts of a grand whole makes that an Empire which otherwise would only be a casual and temporary group. The unity essential to the Empire has in it something of the spirit. And it implies not only a community of interests, but the people's recognition that, though separated by vast distances, they are fellow-citizens, and that their welfare can be safeguarded only if they act together.

But we must remember that this order, this organism of free and equal parts moving for the benefit of each and all, has sprung into life but recently. For years the people of the Dominions, engrossed exclusively in the stupendous problems involved in pioneering their own lands, have raised their eyes seldom to the far horizon, and, thinking and caring little of what went on outside their wide domains, nourished no ambitions for a common citizenship with those scattered groups who, like themselves, acknowledged the one King and saluted the one flag. Empire until within the last comparatively few years was to them hardly more than a name, inexpressibly potent, a symbol of strength, yet vague, shadowy, and above all else remote. Britain, and the allegiance they owed her, they knew and understood, but not the Empire and what it meant to them. Now they begin to look around and realise that they are not separate organisms living for themselves alone, but parts of a unit, each necessary to the other. It is as though the leucocytes of the blood achieved a consciousness, and saw that they were not living for their own satisfaction but for the health of the whole body.

But this sense of interdependence is not likely to be general, unless the people—not the mere intelligentsia, but the great majority throughout the different parts—are in close touch with one another. The area over which this is possible depends upon the means of communication. Britain is a national unit. The conditions of the country to-day ensure its unity. News is fluid,

the people are made to feel that they are one, because their association is so intimate and complete.

Events occurring in any one place, the people over all the country know within a few hours. A man at Edinburgh knows as much of what has happened in London or Penzance as do those who live in those centres. Political, industrial, and financial organisations are established on a nation-wide basis. Political parties are recruited from every part of the kingdom, or if local—Scottish or Welsh national movements, for example—are shaped to fit into the legislative machinery which serves the whole people.

Parties hold divers views, but their respective policies are designed to operate in the same environment. They do not agree, but each recognises the other as a definite factor in the political life of the country. Ideas germinating in this soil are disseminated freely, and tend to create a unity of thought which irrigates the political life of the country.

OUR NARROW OUTLOOK

When an appeal is made to the constituencies, the British people consider the issues presented to them—whether they relate to foreign or domestic affairs—from the angle of Britain, about whose circumstances they are well informed. And until we use to the fullest extent the improved means of communication now available, this will continue. The people of Britain alone, and not the people of the Empire as a whole, will settle Empire and foreign relations upon lines which they deem best suited to their own special interests.

The people of Britain do not consider how their decisions will affect the Dominions, because they do not look upon the Dominions as an integral part of the same community as themselves; and similarly the people of Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand vote upon their policies without thinking how they may react upon Britain or the other Dominions. Their

obliviousness is less dangerous than Britain's, however, for the obvious reason that the Dominion affairs have not such an extensive international impact.

Of course, the people of the United Kingdom know that the Dominions are what is called parts of the Empire, but the average British elector—although in his hours of ease quite ready to cheer lustily perfunctory references to the equality of status that now exists between Britain and “our Great Overseas Dominions”—when the affairs of Empire have to be settled, acts after the manner of his forefathers and does the business himself. The fact is, the people of Britain have not yet adjusted their outlook to the recent developments in Empire relations, and they have only the vaguest idea about the Dominions. And this is not to be wondered at, for the press tells them very little, and frequently that little is entirely misleading. Of Australia, for instance, they read in the main moving stories of floods, droughts, wild dogs, and strikes. Certainly the Englishman who glances through his paper each morning and keeps his ears open, and reads the posters, and spends a modest amount with Cook's each year, knows far more about foreign countries than about the places in which men and women of his own race are helping to sustain the greatest adventure in government ever conceived. The Dominions know more of England than she of them, but of each other they know little more than rumour tells. We can scarcely blame the British press for the meagre reports of Dominion affairs that have appeared in their columns, for high cable rates have for many years made the most fervent enthusiasts among newspaper proprietors¹ cut Dominion news to the very bone. But the Direct Beam Wireless Service brings a new era. Although it has not come fully into its own, the effects of the new system are asserting themselves, and

¹ One newspaper proprietor, a tireless advocate of Empire unity, confessed to me that although he spent thousands of pounds annually, the results were disheartening, and he contrasted the rates at which American news was poured into Canada with those payable for British news.

if the cable octopus is prevented from strangling the new child, the British press will be able to devote much greater space to Dominion affairs.

III

THE POSSIBILITIES

Wireless is to the people of the Empire a veritable gift from the gods, and daily new and wonderful developments are manifested: broadcasting and direct beam wireless telegraphy and telephony, which within a very short period will be operating between Britain and the Dominions, and later television, will bring the peoples of a world-Empire as intimately together as the inhabitants of Britain itself were twenty years ago.

The possibilities are limitless. With beam wireless telegraphy, telephony, and television, a newspaper could circulate all over the Empire. Printed in each of the principal cities, the news telegraphed or telephoned to and from a central office, which would of course be in London, this paper would contain general news, but a page, more or less as circumstances required, would be devoted to each of the Dominions and to India, with pictures of the day's events in every part of this vast Commonwealth. Events of moment; political developments; industrial and social conditions; the trend of thought; the movement of public opinion throughout the Empire,¹ would be set out in the language of the men on the spot. The peoples of the different parts of the Empire, their minds thus informed, would see the picture in truer perspective, and gradually learn to deal with issues from the Empire standpoint and not merely from the angle of their own part of it. There is no reason why such a journal should not be commercially profitable, for as an advertising medium it would make a wide appeal. The mere fact that it was published day by day simultaneously in every part of the Empire would have a deep

¹ The influence of American films upon Empire thought and outlook is very considerable, and constitutes a direct menace to Empire unity.

significance for the outside world. It would be at once a symbol of our unity, and a most effective means of ensuring that the unity would endure.

DOMINION GOVERNMENTS AND DOWNING STREET

But not only must the people of the Empire be in close touch with one another, but the Governments also. The Dominions will never be able to share effectively the control over foreign policy which is essential to their welfare until the Governments of the Dominions can speak to Downing Street as easily as a man can ring up a friend in a neighbouring suburb. Here is the solution of the greatest problem the ancient science of Government has offered. When the Prime Minister of Great Britain, faced with a matter of urgent interest to the whole Empire, can call up within a few minutes his colleagues, the Prime Minister, and Cabinet Ministers of the whole Empire, and discuss it with them, their influence in this complex organisation of separate nations will be more compatible with their status. And there is nothing to prevent this being done now. Although officially beam telephony between England and Australia has not yet been established, its practicability has been fully demonstrated, and before this book is through the press a commercial service will probably have been inaugurated.

We are on the threshold of great things. The other day I sat in a quiet office in Sydney and heard American pressmen in New York and Dutch pressmen in Java conversing together. The voices passing over these immense distances fell upon my ears as clearly and distinctly as if the speakers had been at my side. In a few months it will be possible for the Cabinets of the Empire, summoned to deal with some urgent and important matter, to exchange views almost as readily as though the members of each of the Governments were gathered around the one council-table. Then will Dominion Ministers with minds freshly informed be

able to discuss the position with their own colleagues and, at their option, with the Ministers of every other Dominion and with those of Britain. All will hear and be heard, argument will have full room to play, every avenue can be explored, every suggested course of action criticised, and the decision, when arrived at and announced, will be in very truth the Voice of the Empire.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

But although the miracles of science, by annihilating distance, will go a long way towards solving our problems, something more is necessary. There must be more frequent meetings between the heads of the Empire Governments, for there is no satisfactory substitute for the personal touch. Imperial Conferences are essential, but with steamships—hitherto the only means of communication—lumbering along like Flemish mares, we can hold these only at such long intervals that anything more than agreement upon the general principles of foreign policy or such questions as happened to be ripe for discussion at the moment has been impossible.

The Irish Free State is, of course, in a class by itself. Canada and Newfoundland are only a few days' sail from England, and the time taken by their representatives to go to and return from the Imperial Conference is short. But those of the more distant Dominions and of India are in a very different position; the journey by sea runs into many weeks. To the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand attendance at an Imperial Conference means an absence from their respective Parliaments of at least five months. When they can go to London, attend the Imperial Conference, and return in a month or six weeks, annual, or, if the circumstances demand, semi-annual, conferences will be possible. And that day is almost at hand.

Man's conquest of the air is every day more astounding. Aviation has progressed wonderfully during the last decade. In 1919 Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith flew to

Australia in thirty days. A year ago Hinkler made a solo flight over the same distance in sixteen days. A few months ago Kingsford Smith and Ulm flew across the Pacific—a distance of 7,800 miles—in eight days. Lindbergh's wonderful flight across the Atlantic is still fresh in men's minds.¹

IMPERIAL CONFERENCES IN THE DOMINIONS

Before very long the journey from London to Australia will be made by air in ten or twelve days—perhaps less—and passengers will travel between the capital cities of the Dominions, India, and Britain in less than one-quarter of the time now occupied. This will enable British Ministers to visit the Dominions and India frequently. Then Imperial Conferences will be held alternatively in one or other of the Dominions or in India, and not as now, in Britain only. This will have far-reaching effects. The presence of the British Prime Minister and his colleagues will arouse the interest of the people of the Dominions in Empire affairs, and will help to make them realise that they are Empire citizens. And it would give British Ministers a much-needed opportunity to see the Empire² for themselves. As it is, with few exceptions, those who rule Britain and in practice rule the Empire know very little about those great lands overseas whose destinies they shape.

When the representative of Australia in England—whether he be High Commissioner, Resident Minister, or Prime Minister—can go home in a week or ten days, he need never lose touch with the people of the Dominion. They will listen to the man speaking of what he knows,

¹ Yesterday (November 30th, 1928) Lieutenant Keith Anderson in an aeroplane flew to Brisbane from Sydney in four and a half hours. His passenger was a business man called to the northern city on urgent business. The train journey occupies nearly twenty-nine hours.

² Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for the Dominions, speaking at a luncheon at which Sir Ben Morgan was the guest of honour, advised business men to see the Empire for themselves, as he and their guest had done.

and he will correct their perspective with his wider knowledge ; and while he teaches he will learn something from them, and so be the better fitted when he leaves them to perform his duties at the heart of the Empire.

And when he leaves them and returns to London, he will, although half the world divides him from his fellow-citizens, be able not only to keep his Government posted daily on all that happens, but, when occasion demands, to speak to the people themselves. No living man has ever had such an audience as he will have. In every great city, in every tiny hamlet, in the most remote and isolated places, people will hear and probably see him, the man, speaking in far-off England, telling them that which they should know. And they will see and hear other men—listen to debates in the House of Commons, hear the pronouncements of British Ministers, the roars of applause, the storm of hostile criticism of the people of England gathered in an hour of some great crisis to debate and to decide their own destiny after the immemorial manner of their forefathers. And the people of Australia, in turn, will be able to make themselves heard to their kinsmen in Britain and to the people of Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. Thus by the written and spoken word—illuminated by the presentation of the speaker—that unity of action essential to the Empire will be made possible in a fashion compatible with the self-governing powers of the several nations which make up the British Commonwealth.

At the moment the most striking fact in Empire relations is not that the machinery creaks, but that it works at all. When we consider the circumstances of the Empire—that out of the 500 millions it shelters, 450 millions are for all practical purposes governed directly by the 44 millions living in the small group of islands in the North Sea, and that the overwhelming majority of these are profoundly ignorant of the conditions (social, economic, and climatic) of those whose destinies they

control—we are amazed to find the scheme works in such a way as to inspire its subjects to fight its battles and to strive for its greater strength and glory. But enough of miracles. We must try to put this business on a more adequate basis. Already the instruments for that are forming in our hands.

CHAPTER XII

DOMINION AMBASSADORS AND THE EMPIRE

LATELY Canada has been very busy throwing out national grappling-hooks and flying national banners in divers places. She is, like all the other Dominions, a member of the Assembly of the League of Nations, but, alone amongst the Dominions, she occupies a seat on the Council. She makes treaties with foreign countries, and she has appointed an Ambassador to Washington—as has also the Irish Free State—and Ministers to Paris and Tokio. France and Japan have appointed Ministers to Canada, and Britain herself has agreed to place a diplomatic representative at Ottawa, although whether he is to be called a Minister or an Envoy is, at the moment of writing, in dispute.¹

NO NEW RIGHTS ASSERTED

Now, in all this Canada and the Irish Free State have done nothing that they were not fully entitled to do as free nations within the British Commonwealth, nor has there been any radical departure from well-established principles. Nevertheless, these two Dominions—Canada in particular—have gone considerably farther than we think desirable or safe. And I purpose to show that, although they have acted entirely within their rights and that the steps they have taken appear to them necessary to conserve their interests, they are likely to prove incompatible with the unity without which the Empire cannot continue to exist. Let us examine the situation created by the appointment of a Canadian

¹ Apparently he is to be termed High Commissioner.

Minister at Washington. The object of this appointment was the promotion of Canada's interests, not the interests of the other Dominions nor of the Empire as a whole. Canada holds that her relations with the United States, whose boundaries march with her own for nearly four thousand miles, are "so intimate and so vital" that she cannot afford to commit herself to the hands of the British Ambassador. She believes it essential that she should have her own representative at Washington, not only because the domestic but the foreign policy of her great neighbour reacts upon every phase of Canadian life.

Now, at first sight this suggests nothing to which any of the other Dominions can take exception, but if we examine the position closely we shall find some disturbing facts. Nations are so interdependent to-day that what any one does reacts more or less seriously upon all, and this is most particularly true of the nations within the British Commonwealth, for between them the relations are of course much more intimate than are those existing between other nations. Every act and every word of the United States of America reacts upon the world at large. And naturally we desire that her policy shall proceed along lines compatible with the welfare not merely of Canada but of the Empire as a whole. But the circumstances of the different Dominions vary materially: a policy which served the immediate interests of Canada—or that seemed to the Canadian people to do so—might prejudice the other Dominions or Britain.

THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S CATHOLICITY

The British Ambassador is expected to look at all questions from the standpoint of Empire. He takes a wide view. In important matters the Dominions particularly affected can be consulted, and indeed Canada almost invariably is. No doubt Britain examines questions from her own angle, but making all allowances we

must agree that her outlook is Imperial. It is to her advantage to promote the welfare of all the Dominions, to be always alert in their interests. Thus is she compelled generally to take a wider view than any one of the Dominions could take. I do not contend (in another chapter I have said so clearly¹) that the present methods of determining the policy of the Empire towards nations other than America are satisfactory—they are not—but at worst, the Empire speaks with one voice. Unless it continues to do so, I cannot see how the nations which compose the Empire can remain united.

A CORPS OF EMPIRE DIPLOMATS

What Canada and the Free State have done, all the Dominions may do. Before long the influence of these two Dominions may so prejudice the interests of other Dominions that they will have to appoint representatives of their own. Then there would be six—with India seven—British Ambassadors at the Court of Washington. Some may contend that in practice the British Ambassador would speak for all. But this is the very point at issue. Not only has Washington three British Ambassadors where formerly there had been one, but these approach questions from widely different angles and on different principles. How can the British Ambassador speak for Canada and the Irish Free State unless he and their representatives can agree upon the one policy? And if they can do so, the Canadian and the Irishman will surely have no justification for attending the Court. Canada has appointed her own Ambassador, it is said, because the British Ambassador cannot conserve her interests. And this applies perhaps with no less force to the representative of the Irish Free State. Therefore they could not be unanimous, or only when Britain and the other Dominions accepted Canada's and/or the Irish Free State's policy. In other words, the Empire can speak with one voice only if Britain and the other

¹ Chapter XI: "Foreign Policy."

Dominions and India subordinate their interests to the interests of Canada and the Irish Free State! And this is what certainly will happen.

II

PRINCIPLES FOR CANADIAN AMBASSADORS

The principles which will guide the Ambassadors of Canada, Mr. Meighen, then Prime Minister of Canada, set out in the debate upon foreign policy at the Imperial Conference of 1921. Mr. Meighen laid down three postulates from which he said the following conclusions might be drawn :

(1) There should be regular and as far as possible continuous conferences between the representatives of Britain and the self-governing Dominions and India with a view, amongst other things, of determining and clarifying the governing principles of our relations with foreign countries, and of seeking common counsel and advancing common interests thereupon.

(2) That while in general final responsibility lay with the Ministry advising the King, the Ministry should, in formulating the principles upon which such advice is founded and applying these principles, have regard to the views of His Majesty's Privy Council in other Dominions and of the representatives of India.

(3) That in determining the Empire's foreign policy in spheres in which any Dominion is peculiarly concerned, the views of that Dominion should be given a weight commensurate with the importance of that decision to that Dominion.

"Speaking for Canada," he said, "I make the observation with particular reference to the United States of America."

And, after developing his argument in support of these principles, Mr. Meighen went on to say :

"Canada is a neighbour of the United States, . . . we share with them a great portion of the American continent. Their trade with us is second in magnitude

in the comparison of their trade with the countries of the world, and may easily become the first. . . . *The course of the United States policy in every field affects Canada.* Their numbers are many times the numbers of the Dominion in population. Their decisions, their lines of policy, consequently affect us in a profound degree. We live in constant and vital touch with this problem from day to day. . . . We believe that there is one thing of first importance to Britain and the other Dominions, and not only of first but vital importance to Canada, and therefore having wrapped up within it in a peculiar way our future, and that is the continuance and improvement of our relations with the American people. It has developed through the years, not as a matter of sudden departure or acquisition, but as a matter of growth out of the very necessities of the case, that in the determination of questions affecting not the Empire as such and the United States, but affecting the United States and Canada, the *Dominion [of Canada] should have full and final authority.*"

The gist of Mr. Meighen's argument may be put in the form of a syllogism.

In moulding the Empire's foreign policy in spheres in which a Dominion is peculiarly concerned, the view of that Dominion must be given weight commensurate with its importance to that Dominion.

The relations between the United States and Canada are so vast and so vital that the policy of the United States in every sphere affects Canada.

Therefore in the determination of questions affecting the Empire and the United States, Canada should have full and final authority.

It is true Mr. Meighen sought to qualify this by excluding questions which affected the Empire as a whole and the United States; but as he laid it down that *the policy of the United States in every field affected Canada*, the reservation meant nothing.

In replying to Mr. Meighen, I said, *inter alia* :

"Mr. Meighen tells us that 'the relations between

Canada and the United States on all matters of mutual concern are so vast and so vital that the control of those relations has become and must remain incidental to Canada's autonomy.' Now, these words, read along with his postulates and general argument and his firm determination to appoint an Ambassador at Washington, clearly indicate that in determining the foreign policy between Britain or the Empire and the United States, Canada's advice must be followed. Or to put it in other words, Canada is to determine the foreign policy of the Empire towards the United States. I do not think this would be good for the world. I am quite certain it would not be good for the Empire. Let us look at the relative positions of Canada and the United States. Canada has nine millions of people, the United States one hundred and fifteen millions.¹ We know very well to what extent American trade and financial interests affect Canada. We all admire the United States, we want to be friends with them—to have such an understanding with them as will ensure the world's peace. But it can hardly be said that their response to our advances has been enthusiastic. They refused to come into the League of Nations, although it was established for no other reason than our belief that they wanted it. . . . And as we all know, the anti-British forces in the United States are, and are likely to remain, strong enough to prevent that *rapprochement* between the two English-speaking peoples that we desire.

"Now, what must be the result of applying Mr. Meighen's postulates to the determination of the Empire's foreign policy towards the United States? That policy will be, as we have been plainly told, moulded on the advice given by Canada. It is hardly possible that such advice will not tend towards a policy suited to the circumstances and interests of the United States rather than the interests of Britain and the rest of the Empire. The trade and national interests of the United States and Britain may at times clash. Then is it not clear that since Canada's

¹ 1921.

relations with the United States are 'so vast and so vital,' her trade with the Republic so great and daily becoming greater, that Canada's advice can hardly be such as would prejudice her great neighbour? Canada's geographical position as well as the overwhelming superiority of the population and naval and military strength of the United States is such that any other attitude would be difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, the idea that the foreign policy of the United States would be moulded by consideration of Canada's interests can hardly be entertained. So that what we are asked to agree to is that the determination of the foreign policy of the Empire is to rest with the United States.¹

"If Canada were not a member of the British Empire, this would be none of our business. But she is, and Mr. Meighen has told us she is determined to remain a member. That being so, how can we agree that the foreign policy of the Empire, upon which the security of the other great Dominions depends, should be determined by postulates the application of which must subordinate the interests of the Empire as a whole and of every part of it, except perhaps those of Canada, to those of any other Power?"

DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCES

But there is another reason why the appointment of these Ambassadors is neither wise nor expedient. They weaken rather than strengthen the influence of their Dominions as well as of the Empire generally. The power of the Empire lies in its unity. When its representatives speak, the world listens respectfully, because behind their declarations stand five hundred millions of people and the organised forces they command. Britain would be a formidable Power even if she stood

¹ The foreign policy of the United States reacts powerfully upon the domestic and foreign policies of every great Power in the world, and the foreign policy of Britain towards other countries—e.g. France, Japan (in both of which Canada has its own diplomatic representatives)—has to be modified to fit in with the policy of America.

alone, but her voice would not carry the weight that it now does when the vigorous young Dominions, who during the war put a million troops in the field, back her policies. Canada is a wonderful country; its inhabitants are energetic, resourceful, and virile. They have shown that, although they desire peace, they can when occasion demands fight valiantly. But does anyone believe that if they stood alone, the United States would treat them with the same consideration she accords them as members of the British Empire? Why are United States marines in Nicaragua at the time of writing? There is, so we are told, a dispute between the two countries. It may be that Nicaragua is wrong, but that is not why Americans warships are in Nicaraguan waters and American marine on Nicaraguan soil. The weak are always wrong when they have something the strong desire. Nicaragua has committed the unforgivable sin of being weak and having no strong friends to assist her. There are no American marines in British Guiana or British Honduras, and none will be sent to either of those countries or to any other parts of the Empire as long as Britain remains a great naval Power.

Nicaragua had an Ambassador at Washington, but he was unable to help his unfortunate country because it could not support his representations by force. If the voice of the Canadian Ambassador carries weight in Washington, it is because behind him there are not merely the people of Canada, but those of the whole Empire. But evidently Canada does not believe this. She thinks that the policy of the United States will favour Canada more if matters are left in the hands of her own representatives. But this is most unlikely. When the United States modifies her policy in response to representations of the Canadian Ambassador, she does not do so merely to placate Canada, but to meet or to thwart the wishes of the British Empire. No doubt the powerful anti-British sections in the United States regard the appointment of a Canadian Ambassador as a step in the right direction. They know very well that the

strength of the Empire lies in its unity, and if by judicious concessions to the Dominion Ambassador the United States Government can encourage Canada to believe that she can get better results through her own diplomatic representative than through the British Ambassador, it will have done something towards weakening that unity. And we may be sure that the anti-British elements in America will view with intense satisfaction every attempt made to put a spoke in the British Ambassador's wheel and to foster discord between him and his two colleagues from Canada and the Irish Free State. This may be good for the United States, but we do not think it will be good for the Empire or Canada or the Irish Free State.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

TIME and circumstance and a genius for colonisation and self-government evolved the British Empire, the League of Nations was devised by man.

PROBABLY A PERMANENT FACTOR

The League, formally established in 1920, groping its way, handicapped by inadequate powers, the aloofness of America, and the hostility of Soviet Russia, has so far justified itself that we must regard it as an important and probably a permanent factor in world-affairs.

The admission of Germany and the pact between Germany and France to bury the hatchet have materially strengthened the League. We hope that America will become a member, but of Russia it would be profitless to speculate. The aims of her leaders are radically opposed to the aims of the League. The idea of referring all disputes to courts of law is regarded by the Communist as an emanation of the cunning capitalist brain. In any case, the class war absorbs the Soviet; until that is fought and won, Russia will scarcely join the League unless its leaders think there is no other way to induce the world to disarm while they sharpen their sword for defenceless throats. But subject to the little eccentricities of Russia, the League of Nations must, as I have said, be regarded as a permanent factor in world-politics. And as time passes it will endeavour to gather into its hands more and more power. What will it do with it? Will the League and Empire cross each other's path? Or is there room in the political heavens for two such brilliant suns?

ORIGIN OF THE LEAGUE: DR. WILSON

Here a word or two on the origin of the League may be permitted. Included amongst the late President's famous Fourteen Points, Dr. Wilson contributed little or nothing to the practical work of shaping the Covenant. Without him there would have been no League. He brought the seed, he urged it upon the Conference; but the British saw that the seed did not fall upon stony ground. They watered and protected the young seedling. Except for the moral support of the British Empire, the skill of British draftsmen, the experience and genius of British statesmen, the League of Nations would have been still-born, sharing the fate of others of the "Fourteen Points"—for example, "Freedom of the Seas"—against which Britain set her face.

The Empire not only took a leading part in creating the League, but has always been amongst the most devoted of the League's supporters. If the League has ushered in a new era, if peace is more secure because of it, if it has checked and made less profitable "Imperialistic policy," to the British Empire belongs the chief credit.

To understand the relative positions of the League and the Empire it is only necessary to ask oneself this question: What would happen if the British Empire were to withdraw from the League? The fact is that while the aloofness of America has severely circumscribed the influence of the League, without the British Empire it could not exist. But the Empire could live and flourish well enough without the League.

II

DOMINIONS ON THE COUNCIL

Under the Constitution of the League the Dominions are separately represented in the Assembly, but until 1927 one delegate only represented the Empire on the Council. He was, though not necessarily, the nominee of the British Government.

The Assembly is the more numerous body, and occupies a position similar in many respects to that of the Lower House of the British or Dominion Parliaments. But the Council is something more than a second Chamber, for it not only deliberates, it acts. In it is vested the greater part of the executive powers of the League.

CANADA ON THE COUNCIL

For all practical purposes the Council is the League. The Assembly talks a great deal but does very little; the Council, on the other hand, shuns the limelight, talks little, but does a great deal. The Council is a small body now consisting of eleven representatives, five of whom are styled permanent members and six non-permanent. The States entitled to permanent delegates are the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, and now Germany, and the non-permanent members in 1925 were Brazil, Uruguay, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium. Upon her admission, Germany became entitled to permanent representation on the Council, and this addition disturbed the equilibrium and created a position which it was thought could only be adjusted by increasing the numbers of temporary members elected by the Assembly to the Council. And a vote being taken, Canada was chosen as one of these.

The Dominions are members of the League in exactly the same way as other nations. They vote in the Assembly as they think fit. They need not consult one another or Britain before they decide upon the policy they suggest to the League, neither have they to discuss with the rest of the Empire how they shall vote on any proposal. If they do consult with one another and vote together, it is because they see that their individual interests will be served best by united action. The advantages of co-operation in an assembly recruited from over all the world are obvious, and the Empire is not the only *bloc*. But, as a matter of fact, the Dominions

do not always vote together. And this raises the point we wish to discuss.

WISDOM OF UNITY

The Empire, as I have said over and over again in different parts of this book, is strong because it is united. Each of the Dominions, and of course Britain, insists upon the right to go its own way; but in things that matter they have so far all gone together. But suppose they do not vote together, what happens? The League deals with foreign affairs. The Empire must speak with one voice on these matters. How can the world reconcile the conduct of the Dominions in the League with that solidarity which is the rock upon which the Empire rests? That the Dominions have the right to vote as they please in the Assembly is undeniable. But if they exercise that right it is difficult to see how united action upon matters of foreign policy is to be maintained. And if the world sees that on important matters the Dominions are divided, that they or some of them take a different view from that of Britain, the chinks in the armour of the Empire are revealed and its influence is weakened.

The election of Canada to the Council complicates the problem just at this point; it increases the difficulty of reconciling clashing interests and duties in a way that will preserve the unity of the Empire.

III

A SUBSTITUTE FOR EMPIRE

Speeches made recently in the Dominions and in England suggest that the League has made membership in the Empire unnecessary. The League, according to these critics, is a greater, a super-Empire, which has all the virtues of the British Empire and none of its defects. It guarantees small nations absolute protection from

aggression ; it makes war impossible, or at worst a risk so remote as to be negligible ; and it does all this and much more without involving its members in the dangers and odium that attach to an "Imperialistic" policy. These critics do not explain, they do not know how the League will perform these miracles ; but having an incurable preference for the substance over the shadow, we feel we must emphasise that whatever else it is, or in the fullness of time may turn out to be, the League certainly is not and never will be a substitute for the Empire.

OUR INFLUENCE IN THE EMPIRE

Some assert that the foreign policy of Britain menaces the peace of the world, and suggest that the risk of war would be less if we refrained from helping to shape the foreign policy of the Empire and instead sent direct representatives to the League, where each should act independently. Assuming that Britain's policy imposed upon the League by her solid unified vote is endangering the peace of the world, it is obvious that the Dominions voting as separate delegates in the League could modify the policy only if they all voted on one side against Britain. But assuming this to be the case, is it not obvious that if all or a majority of the Dominions hold different ideas of foreign policy to Britain, they could compel her to modify her views, so that when the Empire representatives went into the Council or Assembly, the policy they would advocate would be one which the Dominions could approve ?

OUR POSITION IN THE LEAGUE

Even if the League of Nations were responsible for the policy of each of the individual States that compose it, which of course it is not, or even if, as some contend, we should refer to the League not only all disputes with other nations, but all questions of foreign policy that might conceivably lead to war, we should still have to

formulate our policy and determine what attitude we ought to adopt if the League decided to modify that policy, or held that in the dispute we were in the wrong. Nor of course would it help us if by some monstrous miscarriage of justice the League, having decided against us, proceeded to call upon Britain and the other Dominions in common with other States, members of the League, to enforce its decision.

However tortuous might be the procedure, we should be compelled at last to face the facts that led up to the dispute or to the formulation of the policy, and those new ones which arose out of the League's action. If we substituted the League for our partnership in the Empire, we should not relieve ourselves from maintaining armed forces ; and if the League or World-Court decided against us, we would have to submit to its decisions even though submission meant death to our national ideals, or that other desperate alternative, defiance of the armed forces of the world marshalled to enforce the decrees of the League.

Those who advocate the change do not seem to understand what precisely are the functions of the League under the Covenant. The League does not make the policies of the State members. It asks only that these shall not be inconsistent with the basic principles laid down in the Covenant. Subject to this condition, every State fashions its own policy, and stands responsible for any consequences which arise from it. If the policy leads to a dispute with another State, the League may, in certain circumstances, take official cognisance of it, or one or both of the parties may bring the dispute before the League, or a third-party member of the League may do so.

The business of the League is not to evolve policies, but to see that these are consistent with the fundamental principles of the Covenant, and, if disputes arise, to reconcile the disputants, or, if that is impossible, to compel one or both of them to accept the decision or award of the League. So, whether the Dominions take an

active part in the moulding of Empire policy or remain aloof, a policy has to be fashioned either by Britain acting alone or with the Dominions.

DOMINIONS POWERLESS ALONE

But even if the League of Nations were responsible for the policy of the individual States which compose it, which of course it is not, and never can be as long as they remain nations, how would the Dominions stand? Speaking for itself alone, the influence of a Dominion would be very slight; on matters of real importance it would be negligible. This point needs emphasis. Some of the idealists seem to have forgotten or to ignore the fact that you cannot have your cake and eat it too. The Dominions as part of the Empire are listened to by foreign nations with interest, for the influence of a great world-Power lends weight to their lightest word. But the Dominions cannot destroy the unity which is the source of the Empire's influence and still enjoy all which flows from it. They cannot have the advantages of Empire and refuse to accept its responsibilities. They cannot be separate nations in the League, voting against each other and against Britain, and exercise the influence they have when they act unitedly. In themselves, although potentially great nations, even now the equals of many second- and third-rate Powers, they do not count for very much; but collectively, as parts of an Empire that covers one-fifth of the earth's surface, contains nearly five hundred millions of people, controls the strategic positions of the Eastern and Western world, and has behind it great riches and organised force, the world pays them the tribute it always gives to wealth and power.

THE WORLD'S INTEREST

The rulers and diplomats of the world know that the Dominions have great influence in the councils of the Empire, that Britain rarely, if ever, opposes their wishes. And so the Chancelleries of the world listen most atten-

tively to what Dominion leaders say. It is very useful, indeed it is very necessary, to know at the earliest possible moment what one can expect of an Empire whose boundaries are co-terminous with those of every other great nation. But this flattering interest is rarely altruistic, even when displayed by nations we like to think are our very good friends. For there is something about the misfortunes of our friends not altogether unpleasing to us. So, while the diplomats listen politely as some of the Dominions declare how profoundly they appreciate their membership of the British Empire, they reserve their sincerest commendations for declarations which seem to promise a breach in the unity that is the Empire's strength. They are always hoping for the worst. Only let a Dominion leader question the wisdom or expediency of continuing relations which seem to involve the Dominions in the entanglements of an Imperialistic policy covering a vast range of questions necessary perhaps for Britain, but that scarcely interest them, and the smile of polite but languid interest broadens into one of enthusiastic approval. The Dominion leader is hailed at once as a statesman, a man of wide vision, and a possible recruit to that select body of high-minded men who are devoting their lives to the maintenance of world-peace and the advancement of mankind, and as a preliminary step towards these great and noble ideals wish the dismemberment of the British Empire.

We cannot escape the responsibilities of nationhood, nor of our partnership in the Empire, nor of our membership of the League of Nations. Those who contend that by helping to mould the foreign policy of the Empire we increase the risks of war are illogical when they urge us to rely upon the League of Nations. Surely if we ought to stand aloof from the Councils of Empire to avoid Britain's quarrels, we should more rigidly abstain from the affairs of the League, since the clashing interests of all the nations of the world are much more likely to involve us in quarrels arising out of matters that concern us very little than is membership of the British Common-

wealth, whose ideals are ours, and over whose councils we are able to exercise a direct and potent influence. Partnership in the Empire gives us very much and demands very little in return. The Empire is strong, and its strength is always available to us. It is not a machine, but a living force. It is not only able to protect us, but always willing to do so. To its mighty strength and unwavering support the Dominions owe their existence and that long unbroken peace which most of them enjoyed until the World-War. As members of the British Commonwealth we have great influence and power, yet remain unchallenged masters in our own household. Membership of the League has so far brought us nothing, but has imposed upon us heavy obligations. It can compel us to maintain armed forces to be used not as we wish, but as the League directs ; and if the League is to be really effective, it can only be so by the subversion of that independence and control of our own destiny which we now enjoy.

Every reason advanced for our active participation in the conduct of the League's deliberations applies with at least equal force to co-operation with Britain and the other Dominions in the shaping of the foreign policy of the Empire. We have not the alternative of being free or bound, only the choice of the associates with whom we are to link our fortunes and ally ourselves for our mutual protection and advancement. The League could not exist without a united Empire, and the best way we can serve the League is to remain members of the Empire and help to mould its foreign policy in such a manner as to assist the League to preserve the peace of the world.

CHAPTER XIV

DEFENCE, FOREIGN POLICY, AND EMPIRE RELATIONS

VIEWS OF DOMINION LEADERS

IT is possible, but by no means easy, to state the theory of what we may call the Empire Constitution ; but this, so far from clearing up any difficulties, serves only to aggravate them, for we cannot marry the theory to the practice. In theory, for example, the Dominions are equal in status to Britain ; in practice they are not equal : in theory all—Britain and the Dominions—are free ; in practice none is free. In theory the Dominions are arbiters of their own destinies ; in practice they may all be involved in war by the action of Britain in a matter about which they were never consulted or refused to endorse. In theory a treaty made by Britain does not bind a Dominion unless the Dominion has ratified it ; but in practice, when Britain is called upon to fulfil her obligations under a treaty and to assist another nation, the position of a Dominion which has not ratified the treaty is substantially the same as the position of a Dominion that has done so.

Thus set out in black and white, Empire relations appear hopelessly illogical and inconsistent. And they are as illogical as life itself and as splendidly vital and triumphant. But although they have withstood some rude buffets, we should remember that they are not quite fool-proof. The Empire has its Achilles heel. The enemies of the Empire within and without the gates aim at this vulnerable spot.

The vital principle of the Empire is its unity. The mechanism by which this unity is assured is always in a

state of flux, and these enemies work assiduously by devious ways to destroy it. And in this work they are aided by those who do not seem to understand that there are limits to its marvellous elasticity.

Partnership in the Empire is a great and a most profitable thing ; but it is not to be had without money and without price. Whatever of greatness and strength there is in the Empire comes from the nations which compose it. If they bring nothing to it, they cannot expect to take anything out of it. And this brings us to the point we wish to emphasise.

If Unity is the vital principle of Empire, an adequate defence force is the physical body through which this principle manifests itself. Without this force, Unity will be a mere disembodied spirit. The demand for an effective voice in controlling the foreign policy of the Empire being conceded, the defence of the Empire becomes a responsibility which all the free nations of the Empire must share. An attack upon any one member is an attack upon all. In the past we have accepted, if not always acted upon, these maxims, but the revolutionary changes in the constitutional relations between Britain and the Dominions since the war and the insidious propaganda of the Third International have unsettled men's minds with feverish doctrines. As men think, so will they do if opportunity comes their way. It is very important, therefore, to know what political leaders in the various Dominions think about Empire relations, about foreign policy, and about defence, for one of these days our fortunes may be entrusted to their hands.

Everything is in a state of flux. Opinions change, Governments come and go. Yesterday Ramsay MacDonald and General Smuts, to-day Stanley Baldwin and General Hertzog—and to-morrow, who ? No one can say. But the world moves on ; the pendulum swings. Change there must be, and provided the marvellously elastic relations of Empire are not stretched to breaking-point, we can meet change with unruffled front. But the views of some of these gentlemen are extraordinary.

They do not believe that the Dominions should have a voice in shaping foreign policy; they do not admit that there is any obligation on the part of a Dominion to go to the assistance of Britain or of another Dominion if it is beset; they do not believe in contributing towards Empire defence—nor indeed in the need for a defence policy at all, even for their own Dominions. They believe, or profess to believe, that it is possible for a Dominion to be at peace when Britain is at war. But let them speak for themselves.

VIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PARTY

During the debate in the Australian House of Representatives upon the agenda of the Imperial Conference (1926), Mr. Charlton, then leader of the Opposition (Labour), stated the attitude of the Australian Labour Party towards the Empire, and in particular towards the proposal that the Dominions should have an effective voice in shaping foreign policy.

Mr. Charlton regards this as a most dangerous innovation. He contended that the people of Australia ought to be allowed, as they had been in the past, to decide whether they would join in any particular war. If a war occurred in Europe and the Government of Australia was compelled to send soldiers abroad without consulting the people of that country, Australians will tend to lose confidence in the Empire. Why should they endanger the foundations of the Empire by making such a change? ¹

Asked if he preferred to leave foreign affairs wholly to British statesmen, Mr. Charlton said that the present position had proved very satisfactory, and he saw no reason to alter it.

¹ In his manifesto to the electors in 1925, Mr. Charlton stated the position of his party: "The Labour Party stands for an Australian foreign policy, developed in Australia in the light of day; developed for a people and by a people who are determined to uphold the rights which properly belong to a nation and honest enough to admit that other nations have co-equal rights. It will prize self-determination not merely for itself, but as the heritage of all men in all lands."

Referring to the Locarno Treaty, Mr. Charlton said that the Dominions had complete liberty of action in these matters. It was well known that South Africa and Canada would not subscribe to the Locarno Treaty, and Australia would be well advised to adopt the same attitude. If at any time a crisis made it necessary for Australia to play its part alongside the Motherland as it had done in the past, he had not the slightest doubt what the attitude of Australia would be. But there was no reason why they should become a party to treaties that dealt entirely with European affairs. . . . The Commonwealth Parliament should have absolute liberty to act as it thought fit at any time and in any circumstances.

We have quoted Mr. Charlton¹ at length to set out the views of the Australian Labour Party, which represents nearly one-half of the people of the Commonwealth. The party has held office in five out of the six States and for many years governed the Commonwealth. The views are illogical, and disclose a complete misunderstanding of inter-Empire relations. But we must consider them carefully, because by a turn of the wheel they may become in the near future the official views of the Commonwealth Government.²

¹ Mr. Charlton recently resigned his position as leader of the Labour Party and Mr. Scullin has been appointed in his stead. As Mr. Charlton's resignation was due in the main to the attitude of the more extreme section of his party inside Parliament and the pronounced hostility of the dominant industrial leaders outside, it may be taken for granted that the views set out here are a milk-and-water version of the views held by the men who dominate the Australian Labour Party to-day.

² At the recent elections (November 1928) the Labour Party, although torn by internal dissensions and manœuvred into a bad position by the extremists, gained several seats in the House of Representatives and won all the Senate seats in two of the more populous States. Out of a total poll of 2,400,000 Labour received 1,100,000 votes, against Nationalists 866,000 and County Party 223,000, a ministerial total of 1,089,000. Independents polled 140,000, and these votes may be divided equally between the two parties. What Labour thinks about the Empire is therefore enormously important. It is worth noting that Mr. Bruce went to the country on the slogan of "Empire and the maintenance of

II

OPINIONS OF CANADIAN LEADERS : LABOUR

Let us now turn to Canada. During the debate upon a motion of Mr. Woodsworth (Labour), "That in the opinion of this House Canada should refuse to accept any responsibility for complications arising out of the foreign policy of the United Kingdom," representatives of the various parties disclosed some interesting opinions upon Empire relations and foreign policy.

Mr. Woodsworth believed that if Canada had to enter any war, it should be of her own free will. Had Canada a foreign policy? No one seemed to know. He pointed out that hundreds of thousands of immigrants had come to Canada from European countries, and asked what would happen if Britain went to war with one of these in days when the numbers of its nationals in Canada had greatly increased. Again, Canada had become profoundly interested in the Orient. He was inclined to think that their trade would develop on the Pacific rather than on the Atlantic, and for that reason they should pay more attention to their trans-Pacific neighbours. Though Canada had no immediate concern with European affairs, she had found herself involved in the last war, and they were still struggling under the burden of debt it created.

He went on to quote a slogan of Mr. Meighen (former Prime Minister of Canada) in 1922, "Ready? Aye, ready! We stand by you!" and contrasted this stirring cry with an anæmic edition which Mr. Meighen had sponsored in 1926. "I believe," Mr. Meighen had then said, "it would be best not only that Parliament should be called together, but that the decision of the Government, which of course would have to be given promptly, Law and Order." Of course it is not to be presumed that the majority of those who voted for Labour do not believe in the Empire or in the necessity for maintaining Law and Order. But the left wing of Labour—which at present dominates the party—is quite definitely hostile to the Empire.

should be submitted to the judgment of the people at a general election before troops leave our shores.”¹

Although Mr. Woodsworth was prepared to go a long way himself, he doubted whether Mr. Meighen in his latest effort had not gone too far. But just where Mr. Woodsworth would stop he does not tell us. We may draw our own conclusions, however, from his attitude towards a plank from the constitution of “The Native Sons of Canada,” which read as follows :

“It is imperative that the Parliament of Canada shall have sovereign rights. Our Dominion must acquire the constitutional status of a nation, enjoying absolute equality with any other component part of the British Commonwealth. The right hereby demanded should not rest upon sentiment nor the assurances of statesmen, but should be enacted as law by the proper Parliaments.”

Mr. Woodsworth apparently agreed heartily with this inspiring demand, and complained that the Constitution of the Irish Free State went much farther than the Constitution of Canada. There was, for example, no phrase in the British North America Act which made Canada a co-equal member of the community of nations forming the British Commonwealth. Similarly, there was no declaration—as there was in the Constitution of the Irish Free State—which provided that all powers of government and all authority, legislative, executive, and judicial, were derived from the people of Ireland. The Irish Constitution provided also that, save in the case of actual invasion (why this sinister exception ?), the Irish Free State should not be committed to any war without the consent of Parliament.

DOMINIONS' VIEWS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Reverting to foreign policy, Mr. Woodsworth quoted Sir Robert Borden, who had said in his resolution at the

¹ Mr. Charlton, when leader of the Australian Labour Party, went one better than Mr. Meighen by insisting that the question should be referred to the people by way of a referendum.

1917 Conference that they should recognise the right of the Dominions and of India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations and to provide effective arrangements for continuous consultations in all important matters of common Imperial concern. That was all very well, but "Can anyone say," asked Mr. Woodsworth, "that to-day Canada has an adequate voice in the foreign policy and the foreign relations of the United Kingdom? Can we hope to have an adequate voice? Can anyone suggest any plan by which we could possibly have an adequate voice in the complicated questions which are continually arising in the foreign policy of the great British Empire?"

This very pertinent question, although it does not seem to fit Mr. Woodsworth's earlier attitude towards Empire relations, goes to the root of the whole matter; but we can scarcely hope for a solution if the policy of Canada is to follow along the lines Sir Wilfrid Laurier laid down at the 1911 Conference: "Canada does not wish to be consulted except on matters directly affecting her," or of those indicated by Mr. Woodsworth himself.

LOCARNO TREATY

Mr. Woodsworth believed that the Locarno Treaty had produced a significant international declaration affecting the status and obligations of the Dominions. Article 9 of the Rhineland Security Pact read:

"The present treaty shall impose no obligations on any of the British Dominions or upon India unless the Government of such Dominions or of India signifies its acceptance hereof."

When asked during his address to journalists at Locarno if he represented and spoke for the whole British Empire, Mr. Chamberlain said, "You do not appear to know the Constitution of the British Empire. The Dominions and the other parts of the Empire are bound only if they ratify of their own free will."

OBLIGATIONS OF DOMINIONS UNDER THE TREATY

But Mr. Woodsworth proceeded to show that if the journalists at Locarno did not understand the Constitution of the British Empire, Mr. Chamberlain knew not much more, for Lord Parmoor had said in the Press :

"The Locarno Pact was signed without previous consultation with the Dominions. It places upon Britain an obligation to fight on the side of either France or Germany in the case of aggression, and the Dominions cannot escape some of these obligations.

"It is true that Mr. Chamberlain inserted a clause protecting Dominion interests, so that the Dominions were not obliged to send troops or any form of assistance in the event of war arising from the Locarno Treaty ; but if Britain goes to war, the rest of the Empire automatically goes to war, and no general election in Canada or vote by the Canadian Parliament can alter this international fact, but under international law she still remains the enemy of Britain's enemies."

NOT ANTI-BRITISH, BUT ANTI-IMPERIALISTIC

Mr. Woodsworth deprecated the suggestion that in bringing forward his resolution he was anti-British ; rather he was anti-Imperialistic. Arguing as he did, he was in accord with the attitude of the British Labour Party. He was firmly convinced that the people of Canada did not want another war. Within little more than a hundred years Great Britain had fought with the French, the Russians, Arabs, Afghans, Zulus, Boers, Ashantis, Burmese, Chinese, Germans, Austrians, Turks, and Bulgarians, and with a host of smaller peoples. Were they for ever to continue this game ? President Wilson had said : "Is there in this audience any man, is there any woman, is there any child, who does not know that the seeds of war are sown in hot successful commercial and industrial rivalry ? "

After quoting this scathing exposure of the appalling effects of commercial and industrial success by the head

of the most successful training and industrial nation in the world, and having presented the case against the British Empire, Mr. Woodsworth concluded by suggesting several remedies only to demonstrate their futility.

III

Before attempting to follow the leaders of Labour through this maze, let us hear the views of Mr. H. Bourassa (Independent, Quebec) and of General Hertzog, Prime Minister of South Africa.

VIEWS OF FRENCH-CANADIANS

Mr. Bourassa is a prominent representative of that nation within a nation, French Canada, which lends to Canadian politics its distinctive quality. We shall never be able to understand the problems of Empire unless we know and appreciate at its proper value the attitude of Quebec towards the British Commonwealth of Nations. The French-Canadian element is proportionately less than the Dutch of South Africa, but it influences tremendously the political, social, and economic life of Canada. In the first place, the French are remarkably homogeneous. Keeping to themselves, they do not intermarry freely, and although some wander, the great majority remain in their ancient habitat. Then they are a most conservative people, retaining not only their own language and religion, but, what is even more important in an age in which change everywhere continuously hammers out new forms for society, they cling tenaciously to the manners and customs of yesterday. They are not like the French of to-day; above all they are not like the Parisians: they are a cross-section, mainly provincial perhaps, of a long-vanished France ruled by kings—France before the Revolution, Napoleon, or the Republic. Nowhere, in the Western world at all events, has change been so stubbornly resisted. Thought is the mould in which action germinates, and the French-Canadian thinks in the terms of the early eighteenth

century. He is not like the foreigners in the West. He has not come to a land occupied by another race of people—a stranger dwelling there upon sufferance; if ancient possession counts for anything, he is the host, and these others, now outnumbering him and his friends, are only guests, or at best late-comers who have forced themselves upon him. Time heals all feuds, and in this great land there is plenty of room for everybody. French and English have lived together in perfect amity for three generations, sharing the fortunes of a Colony, and later of a Dominion, under the British Crown.

But one must understand that the attitude of the French-Canadian towards the Empire is not quite the same as the attitude of the British-born or those of British descent. They are quite loyal, but we can hardly expect them to be enthusiastic. They would perhaps prefer that Canada should be independent, but they are an intensely conservative as well as a most prudent people, and they do not quite see how Canada is to remain as an independent nation alongside the United States. The American outlook on life does not appeal to the French-Canadian. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't, and when you know both devils, it is wiser to stick to the one with whose little weaknesses you are familiar. In this speech of Mr. Bourassa we see that the French *bloc* is likely to prove the most potent antidote against the foreign West, the complete Americanisation of Canada, and Bolshevik propaganda. I regret that I cannot give Mr. Bourassa's speech in full. It is eloquent, comprehensive in its scope, and, if not constructive, at least eminently moderate and fair. In tone reminiscent of Laurier, it is a worthy contribution to the literature of that most baffling question of Empire relations.

MR. BOURASSA ON DOMINION STATUS

Mr. Bourassa thought that they should not, as had been suggested, wait for the next war to adjust their relations with the Empire; but that the Parliament of

Canada should earnestly consider the problem when the Empire was at peace and before the next Imperial Conference. "The evolution that had taken place in the power, the government, and the life of the British Empire was the continuance of that extraordinary process, unique in the history of the world, which made British institutions a standard lesson. Instead of stopping at this or that other point in the evolution of the relations between Great Britain and the various Dominions, they should ask themselves simply in what manner they should follow up that evolution and bring it to the best possible result for Canada."

OBLIGATIONS LIMITED BY RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Bourassa contended that obligations were limited by responsibility, so that the people of Canada, having no voice in Imperial affairs, had no other obligation than to defend their own territory. During the Great War and previously during the discussion in the province of Quebec against the proposal of the Liberal Government to build up a so-called Canadian Navy and the policy of the Conservative Government to contribute to the British Navy, the French-Canadians had said that these schemes went beyond the solemn agreement between the British Government and the Government of Canada—and to the letter of that agreement they had stood. After the Fenian raids, Sir Alexander Campbell went to London to claim from the British Government compensation for the moneys spent and the blood shed upon the frontiers of Canada. Compensation was not obtained, but it was put in black and white that when the Canadian people were called upon to spend money and to shed blood, even in defence of their own territory, but in consequence of British policy, the British at home should pay for it.¹

¹ This seems very doubtful doctrine that we could not apply generally. What would happen if during a dispute between the United States and Canada over the use of water, from the Great Lakes—by no means an

GREAT CHANGE IN EMPIRE RELATIONS

Quoting from the Report of the 1911 Conference to show how greatly Empire relations had changed, Mr. Bourassa read the reply of Mr. Asquith (Lord Oxford), then Prime Minister, to Sir Joseph Ward's proposal. "The proposal would impair, if not altogether destroy, the authority of the United Kingdom in such grave matters as the conduct of foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, the declaration and maintenance of peace, or the declaration of war—and indeed all those relations with foreign Powers, necessarily of the most delicate character, which are now in the hands of the Imperial Government subject to its responsibilities to the Imperial Parliament."

"And," said Mr. Bourassa, "Mr. Asquith added these significant words: 'That authority cannot be shared.'"

Mr. Bourassa agreed that the statesmen in London had no easy task in maintaining touch with affairs in Africa, Asia, Europe, and elsewhere. But so long as they could find no way to share their responsibilities with the self-governing Dominions, it was unjust to ask impossible case—Britain assisted Canada with money, influence, and even with a display of force?

According to Mr. Bourassa's contention, Canada would have to pay Britain for her outlay and loss. And Canadians would certainly criticise Britain very strongly if she laid down such conditions before lending the assistance Canada needed. But since it is contended that every nation within the British Commonwealth is equal in status, one nation cannot claim compensation or payment for services rendered to another and be herself free from obligation of similar payment if services are rendered to her.

This doctrine fails altogether when applied to the Dominions *inter se*. For the Imperial Pact, although not reduced to writing, necessarily covers the relations between the Dominions equally with those between Britain and each Dominion. Would Mr. Bourassa contend, for example, that if attacked by an Eastern nation Canada should need assistance or that Australia should insist, before coming to her assistance, upon an undertaking that Canada would defray all expenses incurred in the campaign? And if Britain were invaded, would Canada insist upon her pound of flesh before sending her help? I quite see Mr. Bourassa's difficulty, but I cannot accept his solution.

those Dominions to share the consequences of Imperial policy on the same footing with the people of England, Scotland, and Wales. No one had ever claimed that the British Government had endeavoured to impose any policy upon the Dominions. It was worse than that. For the past twenty-five years a growing number of Canadians had so lost their sense of British citizenship that they were prepared to accept burdens which the British people themselves would never think of imposing.

CANADA AND THE WORLD-WAR

Mr. Bourassa then proceeded to review the position created by the outbreak of war in 1914. He said that it was admitted on every hand that Britain did not commit the Dominions to action by a declaration of war, but the enemies of Great Britain might attack their territory.¹ They went into the Great War without any declaration on their part because of the new doctrine of Imperial solidarity, irrespective of their geographical situation or of the local or particular causes of war which any of them might have against Germany or against any other country subsequently.

RESERVATIONS UPON SOLIDARITY

He had stated at the beginning of the war that he thought they did right, but he made two reservations. First, that the Parliament should have declared, previous to its decision to participate in the war, that it reserved for the free and peaceful will of the people of Canada to decide what would be her future relations with the Empire, and should not have acknowledged the principle of Imperial solidarity as opposed to the principle of Dominion autonomy that had been sustained heretofore. The second reservation was this: Canada should have

¹ General Hertzog does not seem to agree with this opinion. He says that South Africa can be at peace when Britain is at war, unless South Africa also declares war; which is nonsense.

measured her participation in the war according to her means of action and her future needs, not only as regards herself, but as regards her true contribution to the British Empire, which could never be so efficacious as when they accomplished it on the soil of Canada by making Canada populous, prosperous, and happy. "Lord Fisher had told him," he said, "that Great Britain could not defend Canada against the United States or the Orient."

CHANAK INCIDENT: ATTITUDE OF PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Bourassa commended the attitude of the Canadian Prime Minister in the Chanak incident and in his refusal to be bound by the Treaty of Lausanne when the Government had not been informed of what had happened since the Chanak incident.

PANEL SYSTEM CONDEMNED

He thought the so-called panel system of Imperial representation absurd. The idea that the British Government should represent the British Empire first, last, and for ever, and that one of the Dominions should have a turn on Mondays, another on Wednesdays, and another on Fridays, was surely laughable.

The reason for all this was easy to understand. Foreign nations, realising the tremendous possibilities that might accrue from their evolution in the constitutional government of the Empire, had begun to challenge the Dominions' right to be represented independently. It was well known that the Dominions could not be represented equally with the United Kingdom in London in 1925 because the French Government, among others, opposed it. If the British Empire was several nations, it could not act as one or as six or seven nations according to its fancy or its interests.

It must be admitted that since they had abandoned the safe and sound policy of the Fathers of the Confederation they had created a very complex relation with

the outside world. And having chosen to share them, they must be prepared to face the responsibilities of the Empire, not only from the British angle, but from that of the world at large.

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING VIEWS OF FRENCH-CANADIAN BLOC ON FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENCE

Mr. Bourassa concluded by suggesting "that in the opinion of this House, Canada is not bound by any obligations assumed by the Government of the United Kingdom in matters of foreign policy unless and until the Government of Canada, authorised by Parliament, expresses its adherence thereto."

IV

We turn now to the views of General Hertzog, leader of the South African Nationalist Party and Prime Minister of South Africa.

VIEWS OF GENERAL HERTZOG

Precisely what are General Hertzog's real ideas about Empire relations I do not know. If one might gather them from what he says, they would appear to be in a state of flux. Admittedly his position is extremely difficult. He has not only to try to please the Dutch without offending the English, but to attempt to reconcile his present attitude with those rousing speeches he made before he became Prime Minister, when he held aloft the fiery torch of Nationalism and spoke of the British Empire as though it were some kind of a disease. Of course he does not always succeed. No living man could please the Dutch and English in one speech or by the one act. We must confess, however, that he does very well; he is evidently a man prepared to move with the times. Unfortunately he moves so fast that many of his fellow-countrymen cannot keep up with him. Nevertheless, he has some notable achievements

to his credit. The flag compromise was a flash of genius—the idea of putting the Union Jack in its right place and in its true perspective against the background of the Trikulur appealed to the Dutch sense of humour.

His explanation, after his triumphal return from the Imperial Conference, of the status of South Africa as an independent nation, free as air, yet bound in some mysterious way to Britain, was less satisfactory, despite the General's bland assurance that "South Africa could be at peace although Britain were at war."

When their national pride is touched, the Dutch are more English than the English, and the burghers were not satisfied that the chains of an Imperial vassalage had been completely removed. Suspicion rankling in their bosoms, they brooded darkly over the matter, and, when opportunity offered, have sought from General Hertzog such assurances as should clear up their doubts. And these the General freely gave them. So tortuous was the way, however, so Cimmerian the darkness which enveloped them, that getting out of one bog-hole, they floundered immediately into another. To their unsophisticated minds the Imperial connection took the shape and qualities of the Laocoön. No sooner was one tentacle lopped off than another entangled them. Recently the General, speaking to the burghers at Frankfurt, perhaps a little peeved at their unbelief, yet realising that the position was a trifle ambiguous, dealt with Inter-Empire relations in a style almost metaphysical in its baffling subtlety.

"The Governor-General of South Africa," said the General,¹ "was not, as some shallow minds seemed to think, the representative of the King of England. Far from it. He was the representative of the King of South Africa. And as the King could not be in two places at once—not being a bird—the King of South Africa lived in England. But that might happen to anybody and did not affect the position."

How the Dutch audience received this entirely

¹ I quote from a cabled summary of his speech.

original interpretation of the King's position we are not told, but one burgher at least, before sinking into coma, asked the General another! The General's favourite stand-by is the assertion that South Africa can be at peace when Britain is at war; but what his questioner wanted to know was, "Can South Africa form an alliance with another Power?" To which the General calmly replied, "Neither Britain nor South Africa could form alliances inconsistent with the League of Nations." And although the press is silent upon what followed, we have no doubt whatever that this masterly retort reduced his unfortunate interlocutor to a state of mental confusion in which he will happily remain until after the next election.

V

Many men, many opinions. Each looks at the Empire from his own angle. Each has his eye on the section of the community to which he looks for support. Two are more or less its lukewarm friends; the other two are in a different class. None of these gentlemen suggests secession, but none is enthusiastic about the Empire. And we cannot help feeling that if circumstances had been a little more favourable, one or two would have gone so far.

EMPIRE DAMNED BY FAINT PRAISE

As things are, they have not done badly. They do not denounce the Empire; it is enough for them to damn it with faint praise. Mr. Bourassa quotes Lord Fisher to show that the Empire cannot protect Canada from the U.S.A. or from the Orient, and that they must look to themselves. It is hard to understand why Lord Fisher took that view. If he ever said this, he probably spoke with his tongue in his cheek. If he said it to Mr. Bourassa, it was because he thought it was the kind of thing that would please Mr. Bourassa.

Anyway, it is not true. No nation could help Canada as effectively as Britain could. Britain protects Canada

now—always has protected her. Without Britain, what could Canada do against the U.S.A. or against any great Oriental Power? How long would Canada remain a free Dominion if she were outside the Empire? Some people talk about the Empire as though its internal relations were those between a master and his slaves. They talk about obligations and responsibilities as though it were a monstrous thing that a free nation should owe something to Destiny for its freedom. And this brings us to the point on which the problem of Empire turns. Freedom is not to be had for the asking or to be held without effort; there can be no freedom without responsibilities. Freedom is not the “natural” condition of States; it has to be won. War is as natural as peace, and no people has ever become free without fighting for freedom. Nations progress and decay, but they do not stand still, except perhaps for the brief moment when they poise for their fall.

THE PRICE OF PEACE

We have shown elsewhere that in the world of to-day isolation is impossible; that the acts and policies of nations react upon one another; that the increase of population, unequally distributed and increasing faster in some countries than in others, and modern methods of production and means of communication cause instability. Clashes of interest are inevitable, and whether they are to adjust these by recourse to arms will depend upon the relative strength and position of the parties. There are two most effective ways of avoiding wars: one is to yield to all demands—reasonable and unreasonable—made by those determined to enforce them; the other is to be so strong as to deter others from making unreasonable demands. This strength need not necessarily reside in the nation itself, but may come from an alliance with other Powers. Which of these ways is Canada to take?

Perhaps we are to understand from Mr. Bourassa's

reference to the peace-loving disposition of her people that she will take the high-road. Is she such an ardent worshipper of Peace that she will make every concession to ensure it? If so, I need say no more. Canada, or any other nation with the same mind, need not incur any obligations except perhaps to arrange for its epitaph. If, however, her passion for peace stops short of yielding to every demand, things will go very hard with her unless she has some good friends. And friends of that kind are not likely to be at the service of nations unprepared to prove themselves worthy by reciprocal action.

There can, of course, never be any question of war between the United States and Canada. Such a conflict would be fratricidal, a conflict to make the world despair of mankind. But it has happened twice already! A long time ago! Precisely—so long ago that the good people of Canada, or some of them, have forgotten all about it. But they have surely not forgotten their hundred years of peace. Meanwhile, wars have rioted through the world outside more frequently than epidemics.

BRITAIN'S RECORD

As Mr. Woodsworth pointed out, Great Britain has fought all over the earth. She began the nineteenth century by fighting Napoleon, who wanted to conquer the world and mould it to his own purpose, and ended it by fighting the Boers, who wanted nothing more than to govern themselves in their own way, just as Canada does. Except for Britain, Napoleon would have conquered the world, taking the infant republic of America and Canada too, of course, in his stride; and except for Britain the Boers would have realised their ideals. Having no friends in the world who were prepared to do more than indulge in tall talk, they were compelled to live in the way that Britain thought best. Maybe that Britain was in the wrong; but not even Mr. Woodsworth will deny that if this were so, she has made splendid amends, for to-day the Boers rule not only over their

ancient kingdom, but over that of their old enemies. And in all the wars of which Mr. Woodsworth speaks, Britain has spent hundreds of millions of pounds and lost millions of men. But not one of those who died was a Canadian—unless he forgot what he owed to Canada and the cause of peace and joined the British Army, or volunteered to fight against the Boer farmers who wanted to have the same right of self-government as the Canadians ; and Canada found not one penny of all these millions of pounds. So the story of the hundred years before the Great War has been war for Britain and peace for Canada. No wonder that peace-loving people like Mr. Woodsworth parade this contrast to point a moral and adorn a tale. Look on this picture, and on that. Comparisons are odious, but here, on the one hand, we have the pleasing spectacle of a peace-loving people pursuing its laborious way, studiously refraining from offending others, a pattern to the world, and on the other a swashbuckling bully, powerful, splendid, consumed with insatiable ambition, his hand against every man who dares to cross his path or look at him awry !

A FEW HOME TRUTHS

One is a little loath to disturb such smug complacency, but we must remind our friends of a few things they appear to have overlooked. Britain is not the only nation who fought while Canada lived in peace. France and Germany and Austria have done their share, and Italy too, and in these wars Britain has been an onlooker. And the nations of the Far West have sinned no less than the bad old world of Europe. Even that great lover of peace, the United States, has succumbed occasionally to temptation. She has not sinned often, but she has sinned much. Reckoning the violence and intensity of wars in terms of men and the number of days these were engaged, the one big war of the United States of America far exceeds all the wars which involved Britain from 1814 to 1914. As for the justification, if there can be one for a thing so vile as war, hers was less

satisfying than that which is usually put forward, although the nature of the struggle she prosecuted demanded that the justification should convince all the world. First, it was a fratricidal war; secondly, it was waged against one of the great principles of free government—i.e. self-determination. All that the Southern States wanted was the right to govern themselves in their own way—that is to say, the right to do the very thing for which the War of Independence was fought. Slavery was dragged in afterwards and used freely to smooth over some very awkward situations. But it had practically nothing to do with the war in its earlier stages. Even without slavery, the North would have declared war if the Southern States had persisted in their intention to secede.

The more we consider the causes that led to the outbreak of the Civil War and the circumstances of the combatants, the more pessimistic we become about world-peace. We can understand Europe's conflicts. Ancient feuds, born of age-long differences of race, of language, of religion, court intrigues, dynastic ambitions, want of room to expand, go far to explain these eruptions. But none of these can explain the war of the North and South. In the end the big battalions won. The cause of Unity prevailed and humbled "self-determination" in the dust—where it remained until Dr. Wilson resurrected it for an honoured place among his Fourteen Points.

Then while we are mentioning America's wars, we might direct attention to the Mexican war and the Spanish war—two great and holy crusades in the noble cause of civilisation. In both of these campaigns Right was once again splendidly triumphant. The Mexican was kicked with great force out of the territory upon which the Anglo-Saxon had condescended to settle, and warned to watch his step lest a worse thing befall him; and the effete Spaniard was bundled out of Cuba and the Philippines in the interests of good government and the welfare of the Cubans and Filipinos. For the time being we must understand that these great principles

are best served by the United States retaining possession of Cuba and the Philippines. In Mexico "self-determination" is working with great pyrotechnic display; but sooner or later the peace-loving people of the United States will be compelled to move the brawling Mexicans on again to preserve the best interests of civilisation and American enterprise.

Obviously the Canadian people have been very fortunate to enjoy a century of unbroken peace. Their neighbours, the people of the United States, independent and powerful as they are, have had their share of troubles, what with war and keeping the backward peoples of America on the way they should go. They have, for example, been compelled to send warships to Nicaragua and to land marines. This they do to inculcate the principles of good, sound, democratic government amongst these benighted people. And, as we all know, they have had no end of trouble in persuading several others of those wretched Central American Republics to admit the goods of their friend and benefactor the United States.

Yet Canada is able not only to enjoy a hundred years of peace, but to enforce a hostile tariff against its good neighbour the United States. Messrs. Woods-worth and Bourassa would perhaps contend that this happy state of things is entirely due to the manner in which Canada has always conducted herself—ever scrupulous to avoid offending other nations by speech or act, and instead of spending vast sums of money on her quota for maintaining the British Navy¹ or on one of her own, and thus becoming *particeps criminis* in the swash-buckling policy of the Empire, steadily attending to her

¹ The appropriations for Defence by Great Britain and the Dominions for 1927-8 are as follows:

			Per capita.			Total expenditure per capita.			
<i>Great Britain :</i>			£	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Navy	.	58,820,000		1	6	0			
Army	.	41,565,000			18	5			
Air Force	.	15,384,000			7	9			
				— — —			2	12	2

DEFENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY

own business. But others would say that Canada owes her freedom from wars and those invasions of her self-governing powers to which many of the South and Central American nations have been forced to submit to the fact that she is a member of the British Empire, and so entitled to, or at any rate obtaining, the protection of the British Navy.

Yes ! Canada—in common with the other Dominions—has been able to enjoy peace, to save money which otherwise she would have had to find for defence, and to indulge in the luxury of posing as a nation superior to the common weaknesses of mankind, above all things proud of not being a “demnition brawler,” because,

[Continuation of footnote from p. 322.] :

			Per capita.			Total expenditure per capita.		
			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<i>Canada :</i>								
Navy	.	.	359,375		8			
Army (a)	.	.	2,025,625	4	2			
Air Force	.	.	347,852		7			
Arsenal	.	.	98,416		2			
				—	—	5	7	
<i>New Zealand :</i>								
Navy	.	.	530,723	7	4			
Army	.	.	460,789	6	4			
Air Force	.	.	33,206		5			
				—	—	14	1	
<i>South Africa :</i>								
Navy	.	.	73,479		10			
Army (a)	.	.	728,427	9	1			
Air Force	.	.	122,018	1	5			
				—	—	11	4	(b)
<i>Australia :</i>								
Navy	.	.	2,597,864	8	4			
Navy (c)	.	.	2,900,000	9	4			
Army	.	.	1,494,201	4	9			
Air Force	.	.	516,639	1	7			
Munitions Supply			461,637	1	5			
				—	—	1	5	5

(a) Including Rifle Clubs.

(b) European Population only.

(c) Part of Naval Construction programme amounting to £7,400,000, spread over five years (1924-5 to 1928-9).

and only because, Britain has gone on stolidly tramping along its lonely beats, the policeman of the world, maintaining order and enabling peaceful nations to pursue their lawful occasions, a terror to evil-doers, a champion of the weak, occasionally, as is like to happen with the best-tempered police in the world, hitting the wrong man, but on the whole just and tolerant and wonderfully efficient. And that is the sober truth of the matter.

IMPERIALISM : WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?

Mr. Bourassa's definition of Imperialism is incomplete. According to him, an Imperialist is one who thinks the Empire should be governed from Britain in Britain's interest. The term is more usually accepted to mean a person who advocates a policy of conquest, of further aggrandisement, of extension of territory—one who emphasises the Empire conception of our relations rather than that which exists between a group of free nations. But when we say that British foreign policy follows upon Imperialistic lines, we mean generally no more than that we are taking the steps necessary to protect British interests. And as these interests are world-wide, this involves from time to time action over the greater part of the globe. But national morality is not to be measured by extent of territory over which any people exercise control. Great nations may be as moral as small ones, and anyway, the Dominions are not in a position to sustain the argument, nor likely to support its corollary, that the best and surest way of ensuring peace and of deserving the reputation of a pacific nation is to abandon all territory save that absolutely essential for the maintenance of their inhabitants. On the contrary, they have all followed Britain, or rather their elder brother, the United States, and extended the boundaries of their estates to the very limits of their power, and in doing this they have ignored or been indifferent to the rights of others.

Canada, for example, is a free country—pacific, democratic, like its neighbours. It proclaims to the world

that all men are free and have equal natural rights—the right to life and the pursuit of happiness. But where are the original and rightful owners of Canada? What has happened to them? They were, and they are not. Pacifism has been too much for them. Their land has been wrested from them; they have become beggars and outcasts in the land of their fathers. A few miserable remnants linger, recipients of the bounty of their despoilers. Where are the people who owned the land now known as the United States? Gone! The lovers of peace and liberty have destroyed them like a pestilence. And these are the people who denounce an Imperialistic policy and deplore the Chauvinism of European nations!¹ If international relations have any moral basis, surely those whose only title to the lands they occupy is the sword, red with the blood of their rightful owners, are estopped by their own acts from casting stones at their neighbours. Having killed or reduced to dutiful subjection the former lords of the land, this branch of our conquering race has calmly proclaimed itself a champion of oppressed peoples and a missionary of world-peace!

THE WORLD'S OUR STAGE

But Peace visits only those who, while they do not offend against their neighbours, are able to protect themselves against brawlers, bullies, and thieves. It is puerile and savours of the rankest hypocrisy to rail against British foreign policy, which will compare favourably with that of other States,² and while enjoying its pro-

¹ The aborigines of Australia are a fast-vanishing race. In the far north a few tribes still contrive to live after the manner of their ancestors; but they too are doomed.

² On the very day, and almost at the same hour, when Mr. Kellogg was congratulating the civilised world upon the magnificent success that had attended his untiring efforts to ensure peace on earth by outlawing war, his chief, President Coolidge, urged upon Congress the necessity for pressing on with the naval programme, which provides for the construction of fifteen 10,000-ton cruisers. President Coolidge declared that the minimum requirements of the United States was a Navy at least equal to that of any other Power. And to this the people of the

tection and gathering in its advantages, decline to share its responsibilities. It is perfectly true that membership of the Empire increases the number of potential disputes. Canada has only one neighbour, but the boundaries of the Empire march with those of all nations, and one can understand the reluctance of the Canadian, bred in an environment well calculated to foster the traditional "no foreign entanglements" policy of the United States, to venture into the troubled waters of our foreign policy. But he has no real alternative. The day of the policy of isolation began to set when the railway pushed the stage-coach off the road and the telegraph obliterated the pony express. And now with wireless and modern methods of communication it is as great an anachronism as Puritan New England of the Miles Standish period would be in the New England of to-day. For good or evil, Canada and South Africa and Australia and New Zealand have to play their part in the modern world—the world in which Japan is nearer to Ottawa than was Vancouver thirty years ago.

The Empire is the outstanding State in the modern world. Its policy reacts upon every nation on earth.

great republic assented with emphatic *Amens*. So the great work of outlawing war will go smugly on to the anvil chorus of ten thousand hammers beating out the implements of deadly war.

In the great work of disarmament it is not words that the world wants, but deeds. Tried by this standard, Britain need not fear comparison with other nations. But let the facts speak for themselves. On November 27th, 1928, the First Lord of the Admiralty, replying to a question in the House of Commons, gave the personnel of the Navies of the Great Powers in July 1914 and July 1928. In round figures they were as follows:

	1914.	1928.
Britain . .	146,000	101,000
U.S.A. . .	67,000	113,000
Japan . .	50,000	85,000
France . .	69,000	62,000
Italy . .	40,000	46,000

Replying to further questions, the First Sea Lord said that he had always tried to point out that Britain had done more in the direction of disarmament than had any other countries.

If the Dominions were outside the Empire, its policy would still materially affect them. If a great war engulfed it, their trade would suffer, and were the struggle long drawn out, they would have to take sides. Let us imagine a war, and the Dominions as free nations compelled to choose whether they would fight on Britain's side or risk the consequences of her defeat. What would they do? What could they do but range themselves beside her? For well they know that Britain's defeat would mean an end of all their greatness. For where in the world would they find such a friend and champion?

The trouble with most critics of the Empire is that they will not face facts. It is of no avail to remind them of history. They insist that the world of to-day is not like the world of other days; that right and reason now prevail; that to be strong avails nothing unless one also is right. In proof of this, have we not the League of Nations and a Court of International Justice, to say nothing of the solemn outlawry of war by all the great nations of the earth? What is one to say to those who profess to hold such an opinion? Mark! we say "profess to hold," for with many it is a mere pose, violently inconsistent with their conduct and with their creed—the class war—in which they laugh to scorn any suggestion of legal settlement or mutual concessions. What can one say, except point to the facts and bid them speak for us?

The world of to-day *is* different from the world of yesterday. The revolutionary changes in communication have reacted more or less intensely upon all communities. The tribal concept of life is slowly receding before widening ideas of morality. At what particular epoch man began to consider it bad form to beat one's wife in public we cannot say; this we do know, that even the most brutal have for ages preferred to perform this fascinating rite in the privacy of the home. Some day, perhaps, international brawling will become bad form. One cannot indulge in the luxury of a fight all

in—kidney punch and gouging not barred—with all the world looking on. But while fighting as a pastime is perhaps under a cloud, as a business many still recognise it as one of man's noblest ends. No nation of to-day can call its soul its own unless it is able to defend itself. And as man is a gregarious animal, nations have from time immemorial sought to strengthen themselves against their enemies by alliances. It is to this fact, one of the most persistent and general in human history, that I venture to direct the attention of those critics who talk with such crushing superiority of the burdens, obligations, and entanglements of Empire. First let me say that the Dominions, in their present stage of development at all events, cannot stand alone; and secondly, that the League of Nations, about which I have spoken in another chapter, although it performs very useful and necessary work, is unable of itself to give that assurance of safety they desire and now enjoy. Anyway, the League of Nations without the British Empire would be at best a disembodied spirit.

Suppose a Dominion makes an alliance—no matter with what country—it would certainly involve obligations. The Dominion would find that other nations were not prepared to assist them unless they bound themselves to do the same if their ally should call. And this would involve, of course, the maintenance of adequate armed forces. And the Dominion, along with its allies, would be no longer free to do as it pleased, for the treaty of alliance would limit its freedom of action. Take a case in point. The Locarno Treaty binds Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium to go to war if either France or Germany is guilty of an act of aggression upon the territory of the other. And if the treaty is registered with the League of Nations, there is imposed upon every member of the League the obligation of doing all the League may deem necessary to restrain the aggressor.

France, for example, cannot enter into any treaty or arrangement inconsistent with the Locarno Pact. And

England, Italy, and Belgium are in the same position. They have deliberately limited their own freedom.

VI

DOMINIONS : EFFECTS OF WAR

It is interesting to remark here that when politicians in the Dominions incite their Parliaments to reject the Locarno Treaty, they reveal the narrowness of their outlook and the shortness of their memories. Apart from the danger of being involved in a war between European nations, the Dominions are continually menaced with the loss in which any war would involve their trade and industry. What this would mean to us, we may remind those gentlemen who advocate a policy of "drawing our robe closer about us and passing by on the other side" by pointing out that last year Australia sold to Europe goods worth £130,000,000, and that all of this would be cut off by the outbreak of hostilities between two first-class European Powers, especially if Britain were involved. Britain is the arbiter, or at all events the guardian, of the fate of Europe. Her welfare is so intimately bound up with the fate of Europe that she cannot afford to stand aloof. Her geographical position, her world-wide interests, her trading and economic circumstances, and, I would add too, the temper of her people, prevented her from being an onlooker in the Great European War.

Men speak of the "balance of power" doctrine as if it were some monstrously immoral thing—an exhalation of the bad old days when secret covenants by cunning and unscrupulous diplomats kept the dark cloud of war ever hanging over the heads of the people; an anachronism in these times, when "open covenants are openly arrived at" and "the League of Nations has dethroned the diplomats and banished war from the earth for ever." But why is it immoral? Why should that to which men in their relations with one another continually resort without exciting comment, to say nothing of

censure, be criminal or wicked in nations? Upon the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe depends the peace of the world. Both the Locarno Pact and the Versailles Treaty would be mere scraps of paper without sanctions, and sanctions, of course, rest upon force; and in international affairs this cannot be at the command of any one nation unless it is so overwhelmingly strong as to make that people the overlord of all others.

The League of Nations tends to maintain the balance of power amongst the nations of the world, and within the League itself are groups of nations formed for the same purpose, each group striving to prevent any one nation or group of nations becoming so strong as to menace the others. The only exception to the rule that nations are vitally concerned with maintaining the balance of power so as to protect themselves from aggression and safeguard their interests are nations whose circumstances—geographical, economic, and political—and wealth or numbers ensure their independence.

MONROE DOCTRINE

The United States of America can afford to look with scornful and condemning eye upon alliances because it is thousands of miles from Europe and farther from Asia, and because it is so much more powerful than any other Power of North or South America that for all practical purposes it is an overlord or feudal baron amongst vassals. The Monroe Doctrine has elevated a policy absolutely dependent upon the command of overwhelming physical force into a moral principle, which time has clothed with an odour of sanctity usually reserved for the articles of a religious faith.

Viewed from the standpoint of the U.S.A., the doctrine is wise and moral, and doubtless has had a profound effect upon the development of North and South America along lines favourable to the well-being of the U.S.A. But what is it from the wider standpoint of the world

but the assertion of the Republic's overlordship over this vast undeveloped area of the earth from which all other nations, no matter what their circumstances, are warned off? The fact that it is outside the ambit of the Covenant of the League of Nations seems to indicate that America is not prepared to leave the morality of the Monroe Doctrine to speak for itself and judgment to be passed upon it by the International Court of Justice. In short, it is one of those moral doctrines—like the "White Australia" policy—which, examined from the other fellow's point of view, cease to be moral unless backed by overwhelming force.

Messrs. Bourassa and Woodsworth, Hertzog and Charlton, in their righteous denunciation of the Locarno Treaty, pass over with silent commendation the Monroe Doctrine. If words mean anything, we must assume from this that they regard it as a moral arrangement standing in an entirely different class from the Locarno Treaty. But for all practical purposes the underlying principle is the same in both. The object—entirely laudable—of the Monroe Doctrine is to promote the interests of the United States and preserve their safety by keeping foreign Powers at a distance. In this way the United States has a guarantee of peace, or at all events is in a far better position to club into submission those who dare disturb her peace or do anything against her interests. If there were other Great Powers in the American continent besides herself, the United States would not be able to do this without help. That is to say, she would have to enter into an agreement with some one or more nations to come to her assistance if she were attacked.

Now, the Locarno Treaty—or some equally effective arrangement—is as necessary to the European nations as the Monroe Doctrine is to the United States. France has signed it because she is not strong enough to do in Europe what the United States has done and is doing in America—to crush those who venture to annoy her. If France or any other European nation or group of

nations could do this without outside help, it would be a very bad thing for Europe and for America too. For America would speedily find that the Monroe Doctrine availed her very little. Because she realised this, she entered into the world-war. Had Germany won, her position would have been very precarious; not only would her overlordship of America have been destroyed, but her national safety would have been in danger, for an attack by one powerful enemy would leave an opening for another. The Locarno Treaty, the obligation under which the United States leaves others to bear, is the complement and guarantee of that very Monroe Doctrine which places her in such a favourable position. She had at least as much to gain from the treaty as Britain, and without Britain there could be no Locarno Treaty. It is Britain's weight in the scale that makes the treaty something more than a mere scrap of paper, and if we ask "What has Britain to gain from this treaty which imposes upon her such heavy obligations?", the answer is that she gains nothing more than the assurance of peace in Europe.

The United States of America is able to pursue for a little longer her traditional policy of aloofness from European and foreign entanglement only because Britain has taken upon her shoulders the responsibility of doing all that is humanly possible to maintain peace. Other nations are content to indulge in cheap talk about peace. Britain alone works to ensure it. The Locarno Treaty, after all, imposes no greater obligation than that to which President Wilson assented at the Peace Conference. This obligation Britain and all the Dominions subsequently ratified, but the United States Senate refused to endorse. Its objective is the same: it guarantees the territorial integrity of France, Belgium, and Germany as defined by the Versailles Treaty. It is the necessary corollary of that treaty. Its provisions are in complete harmony with the letter and spirit of that treaty and of the Covenant of the League of Nations. If the League of Nations had been strong enough to

give the guarantee to which France is entitled, the Locarno Treaty would have been unnecessary. If America had ratified the treaty guaranteeing France against aggression, there would have been no need of the Locarno Pact. But although her President approved and strongly recommended its ratification, she declined to do this. If the United States had entered the League of Nations, for the creation of which her President was primarily responsible, the Locarno Treaty would have been unnecessary, because the League would have been strong enough to enforce the provisions of the Versailles Treaty and to maintain the peace of Europe. If the peace had not been made upon the basis of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, the Versailles Treaty would have followed along very different lines, and would most certainly have provided for the safety of France from future aggression.

The cold truth of the matter is this—that America has shirked her plain duty to do her part in maintaining the peace of the world, contenting herself with enunciating lofty ideals, calling conferences, and writing notes, and posing in her favourite character of the National Pharisee, thanking God that she is not as other nations. But although this has been her policy towards European and Asian troubles, she has made it abundantly clear, when any of her sister-republics have ventured to assert their individuality in such a way as to involve her interests, that she regards one regiment of marines armed with machine guns as worth a ton of notes and a thousand conferences.

The Dominions cannot defend themselves. Their defence policies are formulated upon the assumption that Britain will come to their aid if necessity arises. Some do very much more than others to provide for their own defence. And since, despite General Hertzog and those others who suffer from mental strabismus, the Dominions must inevitably be involved in any war to which Britain is a party, it follows that refusal to share in the responsibility of shaping the foreign policy of the

Empire cannot in any way absolve them from the consequences that flow from that policy. Prudence would surely suggest that they should do everything in their power to mould the policy of the Empire on lines compatible with the interests of the Dominions and the peace of the world. The only way in which the Dominions can help to prevent war is by co-operating with Britain; standing aloof, they have no influence.

If there were no British Empire, if there had not been a British Empire, it would have been necessary to create one. Have these glib critics ever tried to visualise the world as it would be without the British Empire? At the back of men's minds there is the ideal of the nations "getting together" and so achieving a better understanding. Men are agreed that this is the only way to peace. Yet, our critics, not daring openly to condemn it, gird and sneer at, and damn with faint praise the Empire under whose banners are gathered five hundred millions of people of all races, enjoying the widest liberty and an assurance of peace and safety more complete than any civilised people have ever known in any age. Suppose the Empire gone—vanished with the snows of yesterday—will any man say the world would be better for its going?

CHAPTER XV

THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE

NOT long ago the press announced the death of Sandow, whose fame as a "strong man" and physical culturist had delighted two generations. His strength was prodigious, his physique magnificent; he was physically a super-man. He had fought with a lion and vanquished it. But while his strength remained almost unimpaired, his heart—the mainspring of physical life—deteriorated, and under the strain of lifting a motor-car bogged in a ditch, it failed. In a little while this strong man, although he remained outwardly much as he had always been, went the way of all flesh. Muscular strength is magnificent, but it cannot last without a strong heart.

Britain is the heart of the Empire, and when Britain ceases to be vital, strong, resilient, the Empire will pass away, unless time and circumstances have developed a new heart out of one of the Britains overseas.

We in the Dominions overlook this, for the distance which divides us from other citizens of the Empire creates the illusion of independence. When we glance over our enormous estate and see how the country has flourished under the hands of our people, we feel that our prosperity is the inevitable reward of our own labours—which it is—and that it depends upon things over which we have full control—which most emphatically it does not. If the people of the Dominions did but realise how intimately their welfare, their very existence, is bound to the welfare of Britain, they would be very disturbed, for one does not have to examine Britain's affairs very closely to feel for her the most profound concern.

WAR WOUNDS

The war injured Britain economically more seriously than any of the other nations it involved. During the last two desperate years she had to turn all her manufactures into that one channel and the country had become one vast arsenal. Long before this the scarcity of shipping for commerce, the grave risks of submarine attack, and rising freights had damaged her export trade. Now she has almost ceased to manufacture for export, and has surrendered for a time that wonderfully organised network of markets that in 1914 had bound the whole world to London with ropes of gold.

As the curtain fell at Versailles on the last scene of the grim drama, British merchants and manufacturers turned to a world very different from the world they had known five years before. Millions of tons of British shipping had been sunk. The delicate machinery finance, commerce, and industry had grown rusty. While they had been fighting for the liberties of mankind, others, regarding war as a sideline, had concentrated on the more lucrative business of making hay while the sun shone and the farmer's back was turned. The goods of competitors whose share in the fighting had been insignificant flooded the old markets, and some of these they could never hope to regain, for the new nations which had sprung from President Wilson's doctrine of "self-determination" had made tariff protection¹ their first act of autonomy.

British troops streaming back from France saw that for many employment was gone—the more irrevocably since it was far beyond the control of any British Government to remedy its causes. Even after a decade

¹ Speaking at a meeting held under the auspices of the National Association of Merchants and Manufacturers (November 14th, 1928), Mr. Walter Runciman said that "14,000 miles of tariff walls had been erected since 1919." "However distressed some British industries might be," he said, "freedom from restrictions would be best for them."

of peace Britain has more unemployed than any country has ever carried. To save these unfortunate people from starvation, the Government has elaborated a vast system of doles and gratuities, and these are dangerous expedients, like drugs no nation can use for long without sapping the moral strength of its people.

IS IT DECADENCE ?

One German writer, observing these signs, has drawn a striking parallel between England to-day and Rome on the verge of her decline and fall. "In England, as in Rome," he says, "the wealthy classes are living in a welter of luxury and extravagance, heedless that the very foundations of the society in which they live are slowly crumbling beneath them. They are like the gilded minarets around an Eastern city, suggesting nothing of the wretchedness that fills the narrow streets below. In England, as in Rome, literature and the drama are becoming morbid and unhealthy and concerned in an increasing degree with matters of sex. And now, as then, the eager multitudes, ragged and workless, swarm in the market-place, stretching out their hands for the charity of the State."¹

Perhaps that parallel is overdrawn, but generally the situations are arrestingly similar. And though men talk about the good times that are coming, the good times seem no nearer. Many suggest remedies, all, or most, infallible according to those who urge them. We learn that Britain is suffering because she has strayed from the narrow path of righteousness, and that all her troubles will pass now that she has reverted to a gold basis. But I think that in a way it is true to say that an excess of righteousness has brought Britain to the unhappy pass we contemplate here, that, and the obstinacy with which she refuses to adjust herself to the new opportunities opened by the war.

¹ With the effect of the dole upon migration we deal in Chapter XVI, page 398.

ECONOMIC ANÆMIA

Britain has developed symptoms of pernicious anæmia. Before the war her national debt was considerably less than the debt Australia carries to-day. With six millions of people we find a thousand millions a heavy load, but ours is a young country, immensely rich, and our population is increasing rapidly. The rate of increase probably will rise as time passes. But even at the present rate Australia will double her population in thirty-five years and in seventy years she will quadruple it. Therefore the per capita war debt will decrease. But for Britain the prospect is drab. She owes between seven and eight thousand millions, and her population—dependent upon manufactures—in excess of her economic requirements, will at best remain stationary.

Before the war Britain was the great creditor nation. She is still, of course, very wealthy; but unless she can find some way of reducing the great drain on her vital resources, she cannot hope to remain among the great manufacturing nations of the world.

I do not suggest for a moment that her situation is desperate, but in a few words, here it is. Wealth connotes the possession of things having value. A wealthy nation is one that has, and can produce, great quantities of valuable things. Now, value does not spring from labour in such a way that labour applied to raw material invariably creates value. For value is not in the goods produced, but arises from the demand of those who want them and have the means to satisfy that want. That is to say, to create value it is not enough to employ labour in producing things, but the goods produced must be of the kind for which there is an effective demand—a want backed by the means to satisfy it.

To retain her position among the great nations of the world, Britain must produce goods for which there is an effective demand at a price not higher than the price other countries demand for similar goods. And that price should leave to the British manufacturer a

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margin of profit over the cost of production. If Britain is able to do this, all will go well with her ; if she cannot do it, her downfall is certain. Ichabod ! Ichabod ! thy glories are departed !

STRUGGLE FOR MARKETS

Britain is not self-supporting ; she grows only enough food for one-third of her population, and could not in any circumstances feed more than one-half. For her, therefore, the struggle for markets is literally a struggle for life. To exist, she must find profitable markets for her manufactures ; to remain a Great Power she must also retain the lion's share of the sea-carrying trade of the world.

Even before the war Britain found it increasingly difficult to hold her own. America and Germany were pushing her very hard. The returns for the period 1900-13, it is true, show a slight upward curve ; but when we compare her increase from £877,000,000 to £1,330,000,000 with the increase in the trade of America and Germany, we find that even then she was slowly slipping back.

The trade figures for 1900 to 1926 are as follows :

	1900.	1913. (Millions of pounds)	1926.
Great Britain	877	1,330	1,895
United States	449	855	1,850
Germany	554	1,060	986
France	460	590	961
Japan	49	138	443

About the middle of the nineteenth century Britain's supremacy in industry and commerce was unchallenged. The momentum of her amazing progress in the earlier part of the century carried her splendidly until the 'eighties. Since then she has slowed down and other nations have begun to move forward more and more rapidly.

A very few figures will show how far this decline had

THE SPLENDID ADVENTURE

gone before the war. Consider the position of coal, iron, and steel, for example.

In 1886 the average cost of coal at the pit's mouth in England was 4s. 10d. a ton, in 1912 9s. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a ton. In 1886 the cost in America was 6s. 4d. a ton, and in 1912 6s. 1d. a ton. Thus while the cost increased in Britain by 4s. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a ton, in America it decreased by 3d. a ton.

IRON PRODUCTION

	1865.	1913.
Britain	19,291,920 tons	10,479,171 tons
Germany	975,000 „	19,291,920 „

In steel the position was the same :

	1865.	1913.
Britain	225,000 tons	7,663,876 tons
Germany	100,000 „	18,958,819 „

Whereas in 1865 Britain produced roughly twenty times as much iron and two and one-quarter times as much steel as Germany, in 1913 Germany produced about twice as much iron and two and one-half times as much steel as Great Britain. And although Britain's export trade had expanded in the twenty years or so before the war, the export trade of Germany had increased at a much greater rate.

In 1914 Britain was the greatest sea-carrier of the world. The tonnage of her merchant shipping nearly equalled the combined tonnage of all other countries. To-day the position is very different.

TONNAGE OF MERCHANT SHIPPING OWNED BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES

	1914.	1926.	Increase.
Britain	21,045,049	22,270,124	1,225,075
France	2,319,438	3,490,606	1,171,168
Germany	5,459,296	3,110,918	(a) 2,348,378
U.S.A.	5,368,194	14,878,761	9,510,567
Japan	1,708,386	3,967,617	2,259,231
Other countries	12,320,893	13,825,724	1,504,831

(a) Decrease.

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These figures can hardly leave us unmoved, for they are profoundly significant. They may serve as a tocsin to arouse England to the danger in which she stands, or as a dirge to remind her of her departing greatness and the bleak prospect of oblivion.

There is no reason at all to doubt that only war prevented Germany from displacing Britain as mistress of the world's trade. In another ten years she would have done it. What would have happened to America it is idle to speculate, but she too had been feeling the pinch of German competition. Throughout the British Empire, German goods pushed the goods of England very hard, and German influence and control over metals and the bases of other great industries reached far.

PERSISTENTLY RETROGRADE

And to-day Britain's position is even less satisfactory than in 1913. What is the matter? The aftermath of the war? Yes! The failure of those nations who owe Britain money to pay their just debts, although she has paid to her creditors the money borrowed for them!

Yes, Britain owes nearly eight thousand million pounds. Every article she makes, every ton of steel she manufactures, every ton of coal she raises from the earth, is loaded with its portion of this vast debt. All these things grievously handicap Britain's trade. Then, too, there is industrial unrest, which manifests itself in strikes, in "ca'canny," in uncertainty, perhaps of all things the most fatal to enterprise. When an industry has established itself, and both parties have agreed upon a schedule of hours, wages, and conditions for a term of years, methods and prices can be adjusted at that level, but at the moment nothing better than a tentative arrangement is possible.

All these complexities help to intensify the depression in British industry, and it is not the slightest good to wait till they pass away. For most of them the last few years have embedded in our system, and, accepting

them as permanent factors of the industrial problem, we must find a new and more satisfactory formula to guide our work. With all respect to the Neo-Napoleonites, I suggest that the world of to-day is so vastly different from the world Napoleon knew that analogies between them are futile.¹

The burden of Britain's appalling debt² has to be borne. As for industrial unrest, it is everywhere. Many subsidiary symptoms of the depression demand separate treatment, but certain facts, very disquieting, show us that the causes for the decline of British industry and trade—or, to sugar the powder a little, the comparative arrest of the momentum that was the wonder and envy of the world for the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century—are the weaknesses which were corroding

¹ In the early part of the post-war period, when the cloud of depression hung like a pall over Britain, it was the habit of statesmen, at a loss to explain let alone remedy the deplorable conditions, to assume an air of breezy optimism and assure the unfortunate people that this was but a passing phase—the inevitable backwash of war; that, in fact, the effect of the Napoleonic wars had been even more intense, yet, as everybody knew, this black winter of industrial discontent had been dispelled by the glorious sun of a summer during which the prosperity of Britain had reached heights before undreamed of. And history, they declared, would repeat itself, and the boom of British trade once again sound triumphantly throughout the world. But “hope deferred maketh the heart sick,” and the Napoleonic legend is no more the mode. But of course it was not without its uses. It helped to keep up the spirits of the people, saved statesmen the trouble of thinking out adequate methods of escaping from an incredible labyrinth, and allowed everyone to overlook the facts, which were painful.

² The greater part of Britain's war debt is internal, and is owed not to foreigners but to a relatively small number of British citizens. To a few of these the war—which cost the country nearly a million of the flower of its manhood and heaped upon it an appalling burden of debt—brought almost fabulous wealth. Thousands of the old landed gentry of England have been driven from their ancestral homes, and the industries, which are the life-blood of the country, have been cruelly handicapped in order to pay the interest bill upon the War Loans. Unbridled luxury upon the one hand, poverty and doles upon the other, react upon the social and economic life of the people, warping their outlook, sapping their energy, weakening their moral fibre, and creating conditions favourable to the spread of the poisonous doctrines of Bolshevism.

British industry long before the war. The war acted like a hothouse upon these weaknesses, but they would have persisted without a war, and unless someone had found a cure they would have achieved the economic eclipse of Britain.

INEFFABLE CONSERVATISM

Perhaps the war was not without some compensations. It revealed circumstances that shook those complacent people who see the world in the cloudy mirror of their own narrow minds. For a time it appeared that a miracle was about to be performed, that the sentinels at the gate would cease to fraternise with those who sought to destroy the garrison, that at least the Englishman would discern other people on the earth beside himself, who were able to produce goods cheaper than he. A very few people knew why these other people could do this. They explained the reasons to industrial England, they urged organisation, greater efficiency, standardisation, better methods—and for a time, I say, it seemed that the English would accept this gospel. Some did, but the majority have fallen back upon the principles of the “good old ways that served their fathers so well.” After all, the war has only strengthened their convictions that England’s ways are the best, and although these new-fangled ways serve foreigners well enough, they would not do for England. Because the Englishman is at once the most adventurous and the most conservative person in the world, nothing short of a revolution or an unprecedented economic and financial crisis will shake him. And he has such a wonderful gift for business, such organising ability, such technical skill, such a robust constitution, and he is so wealthy, that he can do with relative impunity what would send others into a galloping economic consumption. And he is so very proud of his name. And what a name it is! He has always paid 20s. in the pound, and insists upon doing it, when he could without loss of caste ask

his creditors to wait until his debtors should pay what they owed him. No, he must pay, and he has done so.

But those whom he has paid, and those who ought to have paid him, are pressing him so hard, not only in the markets of the world but in his own home markets, that the British manufacturer is fighting an almost hopeless fight. Handicapped as he is, the performance is wonderful. We admire him more than ever, and we see too what strength in the time of trial is a good name, a reputation for honourable dealing and fine workmanship. No other country could do what England is doing to-day. Staggering under the greatest war debt any nation has ever carried, she is living within her income and finding a surplus of £26,000,000 to reduce her debt! The effect of all this upon the world is seen in the rise of sterling, which as I write stands at par. Regard France or Germany or Austria or Italy or Hungary! The franc has touched 210, and is now stabilised on a gold basis of 125. The French budget rarely, if ever, balances, the public debt grows greater. So it is with the other allied and enemy countries.

Nevertheless, Britain is depressed. Millions are unemployed; millions of money are expended on the dole; the country groans under crushing taxation, and the goods of Germany, Austria, France, Czechoslovakia, America, push the British goods out of British markets. Many industries are languishing—and as one great manufacturer put it, the banks keep some going—only one great crash is necessary to produce a panic in which many big firms and a horde of smaller ones will go crashing down. Things cannot go on indefinitely thus. The strain is too great.¹

¹ It is said that things are really getting better now; that Britain has turned the corner. Lord Melchett said the other day (October 1928) that "while the old supremacy was lost, Britain had gained a definite supremacy." One is not quite clear what this "definite supremacy" which is not the "old supremacy" really is. But we devoutly hope Lord Melchett is right. He is a man who speaks with authority on industrial questions.

REMEDIES

What is the remedy? There is no one panacea. Britain must do many things if she is to hold her own in the markets of the world. First she must maintain the high reputation her goods have earned in every country, and manufacturers must give the world what it wants, even though they feel that the customer does not know what is really good for him. And this first-class article presented to suit his customer he must sell at a price which compares favourably with the prices of his competitors. And this is where the traditional policy of the country handicaps the British manufacturer, for to produce goods cheaply he must reduce the cost of production. This does not mean a reduction of wages, but it does mean an increased output per capita of labour and per unit of capital employed. Britain must organise her industries on a nation-wide basis; she must have standardisation and quantity output. But these things are impossible until British manufacturers have that positive assurance of their own markets which every other great manufacturing nation enjoys. Without them she cannot hope for mass production.

LOW PER CAPITA RATE OF PRODUCTION

Of the things which affect the cost of production, wages are, of course, a most important but—except in a relatively small number of industries—not a dominating factor. British industries are depressed not because wages are too high, but because the production per capita is too low. And this in turn reacts upon the consuming power of the home market. Wages in the U.S.A. are considerably higher than in Britain—in many industries twice as high—yet American goods are ousting British goods in foreign markets, in the Dominions, and even in Britain itself. And this is because in America the output per workman is generally much higher than in Britain. The American may work harder, but the greater output is mainly due to highly efficient methods

of production.¹ When one learns that the horse-power per American workman employed in many industries is twice as great as the power available in Britain, one begins to understand the situation. Britain was the first to use machinery, and with skilled workmen and the latest machines she captured the markets of the world. But the methods to-day are as superior to those of, say, fifty years ago—the heyday of British supremacy—as the methods of 1870–80 were superior to the methods employed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

FORD'S LESSON

Henry Ford has shown us what industry can achieve by organisation, scientific layout, standardisation, and mass production. Every man in the Ford plant gets a minimum of five dollars a day, and he works a five-day week. But the methods are so wonderfully effective, the organisation so complete, brains, research, and capital have co-operated so well, that men in no other part of the world produce goods as easily and quickly as the highly paid workers in the Ford plant. But Henry Ford has done nothing that Britain cannot do—nothing, indeed, that she has not done when her manufacturers have had a chance to show what they really could do. During the war they organised British industry as it was never organised before.

¹ Sir Arthur Robinson, formerly Attorney-General, Victoria, Australia, upon his return from Britain recently (November 1928), said: "The manufacturing establishments of Britain are still in a deplorable condition." He attributed the depression, with a few exceptions, to a lack of foresight and enterprise, which hinders the adoption of modern and progressive methods. "There were scores and scores of plants in Britain that were obsolete. If manufacturers were to regain their old position, they must reorganise. It is the obstinate particularism of the British manufacturer that is retarding the progress of British industry." "The engineering trades," said Sir Arthur, "are in a terrible condition, the industry returning not more than 1·8 per cent. on the capital invested." It may well be that Sir Arthur takes a too pessimistic view, but there is more than a little fire behind all this smoke.

Ford factories, so they say, produce a car a minute. That is very wonderful. But in Britain, just before the Armistice, British plants were producing complete aeroplanes at the rate of one in $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes! Mass production and organisation enabled the workers—frequently girls—to turn out five, ten times as much as highly skilled men could have done in pre-war days. And Britain could do the same to-day if she gave her people the opportunity. No man, however, not even the British manufacturer, skilled and resourceful though he is, can compete with America unless he has a market that will justify the expenditure mass production involves.

TRIUMPH OF FISCAL POLICY

When Henry Ford started work, he could not complete even one automobile a day, but he knew that the American market was ready to reward him for a good car. He gave it the car. In a few years he built more than twelve million cars, and his success became a legend. This is a triumph for Henry Ford. Of those twelve million cars he sold nearly ten millions in the American market. That is a triumph for the fiscal policy of America.

British plants, it is claimed, produced an aeroplane every $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes during the war because a hungry market awaited each plane. The traditional policy of Britain was in cold storage, and British workmen and British manufacturers had a chance to show what they could do. But when they returned to peace they found themselves fettered by the colossal war debt and by competition of people who either profited enormously from the war or light-heartedly side-stepped their own war debts.

SAFEGUARDING OF INDUSTRIES ACT

If the Safeguarding of Industries Act¹ had not tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, British industries

¹ The British Labour Party—or the majority of its members—is opposed to the Safeguarding of Industries Act.

would probably have come down in one vast general collapse, but under its shelter most of those the Act enumerates have prospered.

The motor industry in particular has gone ahead by leaps and bounds ; but it came within an ace of complete collapse when Mr. Philip Snowden (Chancellor of the Exchequer in Mr. MacDonald's Government) repealed the McKenna duty of $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. protection so that he could take the tax off tea.

Happily Mr. Baldwin returned to power, the duties were reimposed, and the industry has gone steadily forward. Recently one of the largest manufacturers revealed that with the duty against imported motors, his firm had been able to employ more than four times the number of men it had employed formerly, and that those who earned £100 without protection earned £247 with it, although they worked the same time. The profits of the export trade had quintupled and—*mirabile dictu*—the selling price of the car had been reduced. Before the duties were imposed, the firm employed directly and indirectly from 13,000 to 15,000 men ; to-day it employs nearly 60,000. And this firm is one of many.

One would have expected that in the face of this convincing evidence of the beneficial effects of tariff protection that the provisions of the Safeguarding Act would have been tightened and applied to all or nearly all industries. But this is the last thing that many of the people of Britain desire ; rather do they look for an opportunity to kick away the few props that keep the temple of British industry from collapsing.

AMERICAN COMPETITION

In Australia, where most of the people are strongly pro-British, America sells five cars to every one manufactured in Britain,¹ and in every workshop we see men whose

¹ According to the latest figures, the British motor export trade has sharply declined. Australia is the principal market for British cars. In 1927 the total exports from Britain were 16,140 cars, 1,737 commercial vehicles, and 17,819 chassis. In 1926 the exports to Australia represented

parents came from England, or who were themselves born there, using American tools. And this happens in a market in which British goods enjoy preferential treatment.¹ In the other Dominions—except New Zealand—the position is worse.

FOOLS OF THE FISCAL WORLD

No wonder that at the Conservative Party's Conference recently at Yarmouth a delegate expressed his settled conviction that "the British are the only mad race in the world. We throw our markets open to every Tom, Dick, and Harry. . . . Britain as a nation stands isolated on Free Trade. We are the impotent fools of the fiscal world."

Another ventured to demand that Britain should do something "definite and substantial," being himself of the opinion that a feeble Canutean policy of "safeguarding buttons" would not turn back the inexorable tide of foreign imports. "Britain should protect her iron and steel industries." With this revolutionary demand the Conference seemed to agree, for when a delegate from Lancashire deprecated "undue haste," they would have none of his sage counsel.

Yet there is reason to believe that the Lancastrian voiced the true opinion of England, whose people are the most conservative of all peoples. They look doubtfully upon any new thing. In a world swept daily by change, this is far from being bad; but, like most good things, caution can be overdone.

Change is the law of life. A people that does not adapt itself to a new environment is in a fair way to shading the fate of the "coo" if it should persist in getting in the 46·8 of Britain's total export of motors, in 1927 this had declined to 38·9, and in 1928—to end of June—there was a further decline to 29·1 per cent. More American cars are being sold and fewer British in Britain's best overseas market. (Later advices seem to show that British cars are selling more freely in Australia during the last quarter of 1928.)

¹ Under the Australian Tariff British cars (assembled) enjoy 17½ per cent. preference, while unassembled chassis (British) are admitted free.

way of Stephenson's new-fangled locomotive. The people of England accept the dogmas of free trade as though they were a sort of appendix to the Ten Commandments. Free trade, in their eyes, is natural, logical, and moral. The fact that practically every nation has reserved its own markets for its own goods, and that while doing this they have contrived to drive British goods out of the world's best markets and to undersell Britain in her own, leaves the British people unmoved. Facts bounce off their minds like hail off an iron roof; argument leaves their withers unwrung.

Towards those who urge a general policy of safeguarding British industry, their attitude varies from angry contempt to the pitying solicitude with which men listen to the disjointed chatter of mental defectives.

When in 1923 Mr. Baldwin boldly challenged them, they were content to parade the streets holding aloft a Liliputian loaf so that the people might see for themselves how fared the poor wretches in protectionist countries—including America and Australia—and to warn England that if she dared to change her fiscal policy there would be war. (No doubt foreigners would make war on England to save its unfortunate people from the horrors of having to live on the little loaf!)

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

We all know what happened. Mr. Baldwin was utterly routed. Convinced that until British industries were protected from unfair competition it was useless to tinker with unemployment, he had thrown down the gage of battle in the hope of saving his country. But it would not be saved. The British electors preferred a lingering death at the foot of their venerated shrine to a life of plenty in a house of shame.

And it was the bitter memories of that black day for the Conservative Party which moved the man from Lancashire to deprecate "undue haste." He knew what he was talking about. Once bitten, twice shy. And there the matter stands.

THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE

The Englishman is a wonderful man, but stubborn! For centuries he regarded free trade as a damnable heresy to be stamped out with fire and sword. A Protectionist he was born and a Protectionist he would die. And he probably would have contrived to do this on a grand scale if Sir Robert Peel, leader of the Protectionist Party, thoroughly alarmed by the wave of industrial depression which had submerged England and by the appalling prospects of a potato famine in Ireland, had not stampeded his protectionist followers into voting for free trade.

But this kind of thing is not likely to happen again. The good old times, when only one man in a hundred had a vote, are gone for ever. For party leaders to-day life is real, life is earnest. All the people have votes, and one has to handle them with painful care. Mr. Baldwin learned his lesson, and there will be no more frontal attacks upon the traditional policy of Britain.

A FEW HIGH LIGHTS

But affairs are not so bad as they seem. The Britisher is a tremendous stickler for forms,¹ but if you leave those alone he will be eminently amenable to suggestion. This is why a free trade Prime Minister passed into law the Safeguarding of Industries Act, and why the people

¹ Mr. Baldwin has evidently realised that this little idiosyncrasy opens up enormous possibilities, for he proposes to very greatly widen the scope and strengthen the powers of the Safeguarding of Industries Act. In the debate on the Address in Reply to the King's Speech (November 1928), Mr. Snowden asked the Prime Minister to tell the House the difference between the policy rejected by the people in 1923 and that indicated in the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Baldwin was very ready to do this. It was quite true that he had advocated protection in 1923; he did so because he believed British industry would never recover without it. But he was a democrat; the people had rejected that policy and he accepted their verdict. But the position of British industry was most unsatisfactory. If the people would not give him the tools he wanted he must work with those available. If he could not get a shovel, he must use a trowel. The people had approved of safeguarding British industries—he intended to safeguard them. And provided Mr. Baldwin calls the tool he works with a trowel, the people of England will be quite content to let him go on, even though the "trowel" is as big as a shovel.

accepted it as a measure entirely consistent with their beloved fiscal creed. To the blighting influence of Customs taxation they have long been inured, and have come to regard taxes upon tea, sugar, and a hundred and one other articles, without which life would be very drab, as the natural and proper order of things. So as I say, although the sky is overcast, there are some patches of blue which promise brighter days.

Let us hope, for the sake of Britain and of the Dominions, that their coming will not be too long delayed. For all are vitally concerned in restoring to the Heart of the Empire its former strength and vigour.

CHAPTER XVI

MIGRATION

MIGRATION has made the Empire, and migration of one kind of people keeps it united. The Dominions need men and women to develop their resources, and many are anxious to move to these great new lands. Upon the kind of people they choose depend the integrity of the Empire and the future of the world. In this chapter we propose to examine migration from three angles.

AS A WORLD-PROBLEM

Taking it first as a world-problem, let us consider certain ramifications of our material civilisation. During the past hundred years the population of the world has doubled, and, despite war and pestilence and all that follows them, this amazing growth is going on. In a hundred years from now,¹ if the present rate of increase continues, 4,000,000,000 people will live on a planet where for countless ages not a quarter of that number existed.

But although modern methods enable any given area to carry a much larger population, it remains true that population is limited by food-supply, and this, in its turn, is at least materially affected by the area of land available to a people. The application of this law to the migration of peoples is obvious. If the population of any country has reached or is approaching saturation point, it must either find new areas where the surplus may support itself

¹ It has been estimated that 5,000,000,000 marks the saturation point, the extreme limit of population the world can maintain.

or establish an equilibrium between the numbers of its people and the capacity of the country to feed and maintain them in accordance with the accepted standard of living.

The pressure upon the means of subsistence in some countries is now so acute that an outlet for the surplus population is imperative to their national and economic progress. Vast areas of the earth's surface are still very sparsely populated, but all are not equally attractive. The prospective migrant prefers to go where civilisation has mitigated the rough mould of nature. For years America was his Mecca, but since 1924 the United States have (officially) almost closed¹ their gates in a belated attempt to reduce to a trickle the streams which rushed through them for half a century or more. The millions in over-crowded Europe, finding that great refuge closed, look eagerly for others. Their eyes and the eyes of stifling Asia rest upon the Dominions—*Canada and Australia can absorb millions.*

This phase of the migration problem is one we cannot ignore; it becomes daily more and more acute. Civilisation must for its own sake find some solution. But profoundly as it affects the world, it has a very special significance for the Empire generally and the Dominions in particular.

A few figures will take us to the heart of the problem as it involves Australia. The area of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is 94,633 square miles and its population 45,226,000; the area of Italy is 119,000 square miles and its population 40,500,000; the area of Japan is 154,000 square miles and its population 61,000,000. The area of Australia is 2,900,000 square miles and its population is 6,260,000! When we add that, despite the decrease in the birth-rate, the population of Britain is increasing by 250,000 per annum; that of Italy, with a higher birth-rate, by 365,000 per annum; and that of Japan by not much less than a million per

¹ But the enterprising alien has contrived to pass through the meshes of the famous Johnson Quota Legislation. Vide pages 222 and 370.

annum,¹ and that at the present rate of increase the population of Australia will fall short of 30,000,000 by the end of the century, we can hardly deny a situation which, in view of Australia's geographical position and her national policy, is full of tremendous possibilities.

Here, shortly, is the problem. On the one hand, surplus population ; on the other, empty lands : millions of people wanting land, millions of acres wanting people to develop them. The solution seems simple. All that we need to do is to disregard political frontiers and racial differences and move the surplus population from the overcrowded countries to the empty lands. But things are not so straightforwardly obvious as they seem.

FROM AN EMPIRE STANDPOINT

The Dominions want more people—they want them badly ; they recognise it is vital to their progress and safety that their empty spaces should be filled and their great resources developed ; but they are not prepared to accept any kind of migrant. They want not only quantity but quality. The British Empire has been built up by the people of Britain. It is a monument to their courage, vision, enterprise, initiative, and perseverance. They laid its foundations, they laboured diligently and resolutely to raise its vast and splendid superstructure. They made it, and they have kept it secure. In Canada and South Africa other peoples have co-operated with them, but to the British belongs the chief credit ; without them there would have been no Empire, upon them depends whether the Empire lives or dies.

One hundred years ago the aggregate population of the four great Dominions was little more than three-quarters of a million. They were frontier outposts of the new Empire. Since, British migrants and money

¹ Later figures seem to indicate that in Japan as well as in Britain the birth-rate is falling. Whether this is a mere temporary decline we cannot say. On page 367 the question is again referred to.

have developed them under the protection of the British Navy. The new settlers brought with them not only their stout hearts and strong arms, but an abiding faith in Britain. This faith has kept the Empire together.

Without a steady and swelling stream of British migrants in the future the Empire cannot hold together. Migration, then, as we have said, is not merely a Dominion problem ; it concerns Britain and the Empire as a whole, and concerns it so vitally that common prudence would suggest the need for some sort of a policy.

But from the second or third decade of the nineteenth century until quite recently Britain left migration severely alone. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries she concerned herself more or less fitfully with the settlement and very closely with the trade of her Colonies ; but after the revolt of the thirteen States her ardour sensibly cooled, and with the formal abandonment of her traditional policy, signalled by the repeal of the Corn Laws, for nearly a hundred years she stood aloof, apparently indifferent to the welfare of her remaining Colonies.

For generations Britain left the vitally important work of peopling her Colonies to individual effort and to schemes of assisted immigration by the Colonies themselves. Not only was there no control by or guiding authority in Britain to select, advise, or assist prospective migrants, but millions of British migrants were lost to the Empire for ever through emigration to the United States of America.

During the period 1871-1920 it is estimated that no less than 4,430,000 Britons migrated to and made their permanent homes in the United States, while less than 2,000,000 went to the Dominions. And during all these years the British Government, for all practical purposes the *de jure* and *de facto* Government of the Empire, stood idly by while this great stream was pouring into America—its greatest competitor—swelling its population, fertilising its lands, and developing its resources and industries. Looking down upon the past from the vantage-

ground of the present, we can only regard this as a policy of incredible folly.

THE DOMINIONS' STANDPOINT AND WHITE AUSTRALIA

We turn now to consider the question from the standpoint of the Dominions, who, seeing that they must have more people, resolve—and this is true more particularly of Australia and New Zealand—that these people shall be, in the main, British.

The immigration policy of Australia is deliberately intended to restrict the migration to the Commonwealth of large numbers of persons of markedly different race-stocks. The "White Australia" policy—as it is generally called—is an integral part of the national life of the Australian people, and although the subject of much hostile criticism, the geographical, racial, and economic circumstances of the Commonwealth amply justify it. Australia, a Western nation seated at the gateway to the East, has a population of little more than six millions thinly scattered over a great continent. The people are remarkably homogeneous; the overwhelming majority are of British stock, and have ideals, traditions, and standards of living vastly different from those of the teeming millions of Asia. For a people so situated the only alternative to national and racial extinction is a policy of rigid exclusion. Australia, by her attitude towards Eastern peoples, does not arrogantly assert her superiority over other races: it is dictated by the instinct of self-preservation. The "White Australia" policy is a gesture of defence, not of defiance. We do not regard Asiatics as inferiors, but as different from ourselves, believing that the ideals, traditions, and standards of living in the East are so incompatible with our own that we could never live with them as fellow-citizens. We could not assimilate Asiatics without radically changing our racial, social, and economic character. We do not think it good for ourselves, for them, or for the people of the world that we should shatter our ideals or water down the standard of living we have evolved. We

believe that the welfare of mankind and the progress of civilisation will be best served if different race-stocks develop along their own lines. And this, broadly speaking, is Australia's attitude towards migrants from all countries except Britain. If they are of the right type, capable of dissolving into the community and adopting its ideals and standard of living, we welcome them. But Australia is a British community, and its people are convinced that for its security and economic welfare it should remain so.

Spokesmen of foreign nations have bitterly assailed the attitude of Australia towards migration and ideologists have denounced it. They have declared it immoral, unjust, arrogant, and provocative. They say we are only trustees for a common humanity; that the tremendous thrust of the nations towards expansion cannot be, and ought not to be, resisted by a mere handful of people whose claims to this great country are founded on the mere accident of early occupation; that the surplus millions of the world are entitled to share our heritage with us on equal terms; that they have "rights" to enter Australia and all other sparsely settled countries.

"RIGHTS" OF ENTRY

We hear more and more about these so-called "rights" and naturally become a little curious to know exactly what they are. Are these "rights" legal or moral, or are they just a camouflaged version of the ancient right of the strong to seize what they want by force? Let us examine them.

It needs but a few words to dispose of the claim that nations with a redundant population have any legal rights (that is to say, claims recognised by international law) of access to sparsely settled countries. No such rights exist, nor as long as there are sovereign States will they ever be recognised.¹ If the nationals of a foreign

¹ M. Albert Thomas, Director of the International Labour Office of the League of Nations, recently advocated a supreme organisation above national sovereignty which should have authority to distribute population impartially and rationally and to control and direct migratory movements.

State had a legal right to enter the territories of another State as and when they pleased, there would end State sovereignty, which connotes legal ownership and control. This claim to a "legal right" has never been seriously asserted. It is a still-born infant of diplomatic bluff, fated to be buried in an obscure corner of the world's backyard, for the League of Nations, which may be regarded as the supreme authority upon the law of nations, has decided very definitely that they have no such right. When the Covenant of the League of Nations was being drafted, the Japanese delegates, who wished to insert what became known as the "Racial Equality Clause," raised this point. The avowed object of the clause was to secure the League's recognition of the right of the nationals of all States members of the League to pass freely into each other's territories. Japan urged that it sought no more than a recognition of a technical right of free entrance and that there was no intention to act upon it.

I opposed the clause very strongly, but when the head of the Japanese delegation approached me, I said, for Australia, that I did not object to a declaration of racial equality in the Covenant, provided that it stated in clear and unambiguous terms that this did not confer any right to enter Australia—or any other country—except as and to the extent that its Government might determine. As the Japanese delegates would not accept this proviso, the proposed clause purporting to recognise "racial equality" and the technical right of entry was submitted to the Committee charged with the drafting of the Covenant. The late President Wilson, Chairman of the Committee, declared it to have been defeated.¹

¹ President Wilson's ruling amazed and angered the Committee appointed to draft the Covenant, for the proposed clause had been approved by a majority of more than two to one! Behind this unconventional decision of the President is an intensely interesting story, throwing a flood of light upon the way in which the fate of nations is determined even in these days of "open covenants openly arrived at." But I do not propose to tell it here.

And the delegates having raised the wider question of migration, the Conference laid down in definite and precise terms that this was part of the domestic policy and wholly within the jurisdiction of each State—a question over which other nations and the League had no control or authority. On the other hand, the “legal right” of nations to regulate migration and, if they think fit, to prohibit entrance into their territories is clear. The immigration policy of Australia is in accordance with the “Law of Nations.” Those who seek to brush it aside are therefore attempting an illegal act.

MORAL RIGHTS

Let us examine, too, the “moral rights” of the surplus population of overcrowded States to enter thinly settled countries. Some contend that it is manifestly unfair as well as “morally wrong” that millions of people in Europe and Asia should be jostling one another for want of elbow-room, condemned to a drab and hopeless struggle for mere existence, while in other countries—Australia and Canada—abundant land lies undeveloped for want of population. If these millions, denied access to natural opportunities by selfish, man-made laws, are not to perish, let the bars be taken down so that all mankind may mingle together in one great brotherhood.

These claims are based upon “need.” All men have an equal right to life and the pursuit of happiness. These millions are men. If they are to live and attain happiness, they must have access to land. There is no land available for them in their own country. Therefore they have a “moral right” to go where land is unoccupied. Now, if that is so, it would seem that the title of the present inhabitants of the land is merely a “permissive occupancy.” If, on the other hand, the occupants have “rights,” which as human beings they must have, just what are they? They certainly cannot be very substantial if they do not include the right to regulate immigration.

Again, if one admits that "need" is sufficient to found a valid claim to any unoccupied land, it would seem that the more urgent the need, the greater the claim. And if this be granted, precedence must be given to the nationals of that country whose excess of population is greatest. As, broadly speaking, the higher the type, the less rapidly it multiplies, this doctrine would give the earth ultimately to the less developed races; and since, obviously, the excess population of any country with a high birth-rate would multiply its stock even more rapidly in new and fertile countries where the climate was good, the higher type of man would gradually be crushed on to the barren fringe of the world and killed off. And this would mean the end of civilisation. For it is to the discoveries, inventions, and leadership of the more advanced races that the world owes those improvements in production and communications, in hygiene, sanitation, and treatment of disease that have enabled it to support its gigantic and increasing multitudes.¹

Then, too, if the right of the surplus population to migrate wherever there is room springs from "need" and rests upon a moral basis, their right must apply generally, giving the landless freedom to go where they please—freedom, for example, to settle in the sparsely settled States of America, where there still is room for millions, or in Siberia, which, twice the size of Australia, has a population of only 1·3 persons to the square mile.

But no one suggests that they have that right—or, at any rate, no one suggests that they should try to exercise it—nor are they ever likely to do so. And the reason is plain. America and Russia are great Powers, able to shut their gates in the face of the world with impunity. So no one talks of the "rights" of the surplus millions to migrate to those countries, and their right to exclude

¹ The suggestion that a people who persist in multiplying beyond the limits of the food-supply of their own country have a right to force their surplus millions upon other peoples and to make a refusal to admit them a *casus belli* is monstrous.

whomever they wish will never be questioned save with bated breath.

But Australia has only six millions of people. Those "rights," which upon the horizon of America or Russia or any great nation are diaphanous clouds no bigger than a man's hand, seen against the background of the Dominions cover the entire heavens like a pall. And, in the case of Australia, out of the blackness would dart the angry lightnings of war, and the millions make good their "rights" by force but that the British Empire stands like the Angel with the Flaming Sword to guard its gates. These so-called "moral rights" turn out upon examination to be nothing more than the right of the strong to take what seems good to them. Might is Right! In the case of weak nations the "moral rights" of the surplus millions bloom luxuriantly, confronted with strength they wither, or their efflorescence is retarded for an indefinite period. Alternatively, the birth-rate adjusts itself to the food-supply of their country.

Of "rights" apart from the right of the strong to despoil the weak there is not a vestige. Admittedly all men have an equal right to life and the pursuit of happiness. But this does not mean that the idle and improvident have an equal right to the wealth created by the provident and thrifty. The people who occupy the Dominions are the descendants of the men and women who pioneered them. This applies with as much force to the French-Canadian and the Dutch of South Africa as to the British of these and other Dominions. When the handful of men and women of the "First Fleet" landed on the shores of Port Jackson and made good their precarious foothold, they found themselves in a land covered with dense forests, far from the old accustomed centres of civilisation, and set about planting an outpost of Empire. What they endured, how they fought against savage tribes and nature no less savage but more implacable, against famine and disease, floods and droughts, has been told in prosaic fashion in the history of Australia; but some day our Homer will come and will pour out in inspir-

ing verse the story of their heroic struggles, their indomitable courage, and their faith in the future of the great new land in which they had made their home. But no story that future poets may pen can well dim the splendour of the unadorned record of the country's progress from the date of the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 unto this day, when, through the labours and sacrifices of these pioneers, civilisation has firmly established itself, splendid cities have arisen, and a land which for countless centuries grudgingly maintained a few tribes of primitive peoples, pours into the granaries of Europe food for its tremendous population.

And this applies in essentials to every one of the great Dominions. We see, therefore, that whatever the Dominions are to-day is due to the people who pioneered and developed them. If to-day Australia, for example, offers strong inducement to the would-be migrant, it is due only to the arduous labours of millions of men and women who throughout the years helped to develop its great resources, and who in the doing of it have spent thousands of millions of capital. And even the labours of these millions of men and women of British stock and the expenditure of vast sums of money, most of it borrowed from Britain, would not have sufficed to make Australia what it is but for the absolute security ensured by the British Navy during its long years of nonage.

Australia as it is to-day is the work of Australian hands fructified by British capital and protected by the naval power of Britain. It is not now a country in a state of nature, and free, like the air, for all the peoples of the earth.

These peoples whose urgent needs we are adjured to consider have neither had hand nor part in developing it. When it was nothing but a remote and untamed wilderness they and their progenitors ignored its existence. Throughout the ages Australia stood, solitary, uninviting, shrouded in the mists of the immense ocean in which it is set. It was there for all the world to take, to develop, and to hold ; but these nations whose surplus population now clamours

for admission¹ ignored its existence or else passed it by with lordly contempt.

What they wanted then—what they want now—is not to build a home for themselves, but to find a home ready made for them by other men. Not for them the prospect of generations of heart-breaking toil in the depths of primeval forests fighting pestilence, famine, flood, and drought, cut off from civilisation by a waste of waters—such things do not appeal to them. Their desire is to pass in the cool of the day into a pleasant garden cultivated by other men—to reap where others have sown.

THE AUSTRALIAN STANDPOINT

But let us turn from wandering in these regions of shadowy rights to survey formidable realities. Granted that Australia has the legal and moral right to shut its doors upon the surplus millions of the world, is a migration policy which totally excludes the coloured races and discriminates amongst the white, encouraging migrants of British stock and restricting those from certain European countries to a mere handful—is this a good policy for Australia?

We are a white island in a vast coloured ocean. If we are not to be submerged we must follow the example of that indomitable people the Dutch, and build dykes

¹ A Conference, attended by representatives of twenty-eight countries, which met at Geneva in September 1927, expressed the opinion that “no nation was entitled to prevent the adequate use of its land and that the surplus inhabitants of over-populated countries must find outlets in underpopulated countries.” As the expression of a pious hope this opinion is quite unexceptionable. It is in effect but a modern affirmation of the teachings of Christ—which the Western world believes, but upon which in practice it consistently turns its back. It may be assumed that the majority of the twenty-eight nations represented at the Conference were over-populated. This opinion does not differ in essentials from that of the “have-nots” that the “haves” should share their substance with them. In other words, that the rewards of industry and idleness should be the same. One inevitable consequence of its general application would be the obliteration of race distinctions, the submergence of the fit, to whom all progress has been and is due, by the unfit, who bring into the world mouths but neither hands nor brains.

through which the merest trickle of the sea of colour cannot find its way. For us, as for them, half-measures are useless. Total exclusion is the only practicable policy. Whatever of virtue or of strength we have is fast rooted in our breeding. Race may be, as some highbrows didactically declare, a relic of tribal days, but it still counts for very much in human affairs.¹

There is, no doubt, much nonsense written about race. Ethnologically there are few, if any, pure-bred races. The population of the British Isles has been built up through the mingling of many different peoples—Briton and Saxon, Northmen and Danes—superimposed upon an earlier and non-Celtic people. Climate and the environment of a group of islands hemmed in by the seas have, after fifteen hundred years of conflict, intermarriage, and co-operation, evolved a type² that differs from any of the parent strains. This type we call the British race. The tribes which produced the British people were no doubt themselves of mixed descent. Go still farther, and all the world's akin, springing from two or three primeval types, perhaps from one.

But in the world to-day we find many races, each with its own distinctive ideals, traditions, history, and outlook on life. All are not at the same stage of development, and among the more advanced all do not press forward to the same goal nor move with the same speed. Some, impelled with dynamic energy, are ever in the van of progress, seeking always some new thing. Others let the world pass by. The political, social, and economic ideas of these two strains are poles asunder, and in many other

¹ We do not speak of race in the biological or even the ethnic sense, but in the ordinarily accepted meaning of the term, which indicates a distinct type or strain of people with well-marked national characteristics.

² Sir Arthur Keith, lecturing before the Anthropological Society (November 1928) on the evolution of the human race, said, *inter alia*, that the evolution of a new racial type was affected by physiological factors moulding the body and geographical factors isolating the cradle in which the physiological factors operated. Race feeling was part of the evolutionary machinery for safeguarding a race's purity.

cases further mingling of the races can only result in watering down the best qualities in each stock. Frequently the difference is unbridgeable ; those races can never be assimilated. Now, the character of the British people is strong and persistent ; it is their greatest asset. It has raised them from isolation and obscurity to their position among the great World-Powers. It is by no accident that the British people are in Australia, but by the force of their national character. As long as they retain this, everything is possible. The ideal of a "White Australia," and one peopled in the main by men and women of British stock, reflects the traditions and achievements of our race. Racial purity pays in the long run. A certain percentage of the people of some European countries can be absorbed into our community, but we cannot assimilate these coloured peoples ; their ways are not ours. The racial and economic barriers between us and them are insuperable. We cannot marry their women nor they ours without producing a race of half-castes at which both races would spit contempt. Nor can we permit them to labour alongside us without destroying that high standard of living which is an integral part of our national life.

A PIEBALD AUSTRALIA

Some have suggested that we should solve these difficulties by allotting to the coloured races—and with us this means Asiatics—the northern half of our continent. One writer, Mr. Fleetwood Chidell, has recently outlined this scheme in his most interesting book *Australia, White or Yellow*. Mr. Chidell sees in our situation a parallel to the situation of the Eastern Roman Empire in its latter days, where, he assures us, "a precarious situation was saved time and time again by a wise expedient of statesmanship. Dangerous enemies were turned into invaluable allies by inviting them to occupy coveted regions."

Mr. Chidell's scheme is not new, and the fate of the Roman Empire would scarcely encourage Australia to follow its example. The policy which he recommends

to us as a "wise expedient of statesmanship" appears a course dictated by fear rather than by reason. Anyway, it is not practicable. We could not segregate coloured races in Australia. Of course, nothing is easier than to allot them a region, to draw a line beyond which they must not come. But who is to guard the line? It would be three thousand miles long: we would be unable to find men enough for the job. There are nearly 120,000,000 people in the United States of America, but so far they have not been able to prevent the bootleggers and "gate-crashers" crossing the border from Canada and Mexico.

Mr. Chidell seems to believe that the Asiatics would stay where they were put, and, leaving the fertile and relatively well-developed south to the whites, settle contentedly to the laborious and less remunerative work of pioneering the unsettled country. But of course they would do nothing of the kind. They want some of the good things of life, and they would trickle across the line to civilisation where they could obtain these good things with the least labour.

But whether they did or no, how would their presence better us? Now we are masters in our own house. To whom would the country belong then? For a little while no doubt we should outnumber them,¹ but not

¹ The rate at which races with a high birth-rate can multiply when transplanted to a country with a healthy climate and decent conditions of living may be gathered from the following minute by Mr. C. H. Wickens, Commonwealth Statistician: "The present population of Australia at an annual increment of 2 per cent. per annum would in twenty-five years amount to 10,250,000, and in fifty years to 16,823,000. In the same time the 35,000 Italians now residing in Australia (*if the rate of increase—17.46 per cent. per annum—were maintained*) would increase in twenty-five years to 1,900,000 and in fifty years to 110,000,000. . . . By rate of increase I mean that the number of net immigrants year by year will bear the same numerical relation to the increasing number of Italians in Australia." Of course in practice the rate of increase of this stock would be very much less; but there is little reason to doubt that it would be much higher than the British. It is said that the birth-rate is falling in Italy, and that Signor Mussolini is much disturbed by this decline in the fecundity of a people whose numbers already exceed the present capacity of their country to support.

for so very long. Despite the high rate at which the population is increasing, the birth-rate in Australia is low—one of the lowest in the world ; but the birth-rate in the Eastern nations is very high, and in the splendid climate of Australia the high death-rate which keeps down the increase of population in their own lands would fall considerably, and they would multiply with alarming rapidity. As their numbers grew, they would assert themselves. They would demand this and that concession. They would want the colour line pushed farther south or the ban upon entrance to the white man's territory removed. Suppose we did not continue the policy of "wise statesmanship" by giving them what they coveted—what would happen ? They would appeal to their fatherland for aid. And is it likely that the appeal would fall on deaf ears when shouted by millions in Australia passionately demanding justice. "Justice," we may be sure, would then mean that they should control the whole continent of Australia.

And then, unless, utterly degenerate, we meekly handed over the government of the continent to them, we should have to fight. But against what fearful odds should we have to contend ? The community honey-combed with enemy agents, its physical and moral fibre weakened through a lowered standard of living which coloured labour would have forced upon the Australian people, and ringed about by the forces of the enemy within and without our gates, we would be in a desperate way. Nothing but a miracle could save us ; but miracles do not happen to aid men who have proved themselves craven weaklings. And so for us it would be the end.

The world would look on with a cynical smile—cloaking perhaps its inward satisfaction with a thin veneer of pious platitudes. Out of our misfortunes would come to others a tangible gain. When, out on the frozen steppes, hapless travellers pursued by wolves, whose dreadful howls sound in their ears like the knell of doom, note that one of their number has fallen from the sleigh, and catch a fleeting glimpse of the ravenous beasts tear-

ing his quivering body, their horror at his fate is almost lost in the thought that their own chances of escape are greatly enhanced.

No! We shall fare better if we have our enemies in front of us. Our critics tell us that if we persist with the "White Australia" policy we may lose the country. Perhaps they are right. We certainly will lose it if we abandon that policy. For us it is the only possible policy.

IS AUSTRALIA'S POLICY PROFITABLE ?

But is the policy profitable? Would not the country progress more rapidly if we took advantage of coloured labour from the East and the relatively cheap labour from Southern Europe? No doubt something is to be said for this. Australia wants people to develop her vacant spaces, and we would get them in millions if we threw open the doors. But even as it solved one difficulty, it would create new and more desperate ones.¹

America is finding this out, to her cost. She had

¹ In migration to the Dominions two things are essential: the racial peculiarities of the migrants must not differ so widely from those of the people of the country in which they settle as to make assimilation without degeneration of the parent type impossible, and they must have the intention of merging themselves completely in the body-politic of the new country, making the ideals of the people their own, and giving their undivided allegiance to its Government. We do not want racial groups retaining their identity and deliberately holding aloof from the rest of the community, remaining, as the years pass, an alien element in, but not an integral part of, the community.

Mussolini's decree of March 24th, 1928, that an Italian citizen, whether naturalised or not, must remain an Italian citizen, no matter in what land he lives, unto the seventh generation, is subversive of that plenary authority of sovereign States over the people within their territories upon which government depends. Unless and until it is withdrawn, Italian immigration into Australia ought to be completely suspended. In any case, we do not want little Italys—citadels of Fascism and of sedition—in our midst, looking across the sea to Mussolini for orders, but men and women who are prepared to make this country their own, to adopt its ideals, and to know no other gods but ours, and to work diligently and whole-heartedly for the advancement of the Commonwealth and the integrity of the Empire.

empty spaces to fill ; she opened her gates—reached out and gathered people from all corners of the earth in tens of millions. She poured them into the melting-pot—but millions did not melt.¹

Tried by the test of material gains, the policy of America has been eminently successful. She has become one of the Great Powers. She is the greatest manufacturing country, the richest nation in the world. But some think that in gaining the whole world she has come perilously near losing her own soul. When she set out, her population was homogeneous—the vast bulk of British descent. To-day the Anglo-Saxon element is submerged, and the foreign and unassimilable elements of the population are increasing more rapidly than the original stock.

America has belatedly tried to close her gates,² but

¹ Bishop Lloyd of Saskatchewan, Canada, writes very convincingly on the fallacy of the “melting-pot.” For a long time, he says, the United States have been toying with the idea, but with their usual good sense they now realise it has been a very expensive national toy, for instead of producing the super-man for the super-nation, it has only evolved a heavy crop of hyphenated Americans. He quotes Mr. Lewis, a prominent Chicago lawyer, to show that it is imperative that the predominance of its foundation stock (British) should be maintained. Whether this is now possible is doubtful, for the melting-pot has melted American institutions rather than the immigrant, for whose special purification it was intended. Mr. Lewis points out that when the American advocated “open door” immigration and the “melting-pot” idea, he had no conception that the institutions of his country, its laws, its political habits, and traditions, were to be modified by the melting-pot. He believed that in some way the native blood of the American was to remain unchanged. It was the immigrant who was to be melted down. Until recently the great mass of the American people held this view. But a tremendous change has come over the mind of the thinking American public. No one claims that the foreign migrant is less moral or less hard-working ; the essence of the objection to the “open door” is that they are different in language, in psychology, customs, and in many other ways. And so the American is trying to save the stock that made America. He is giving preference to British immigrants. So far so good. But his effort is belated—the damage has been done.

² The Johnson Act, passed in 1924, reduced the quotas of immigrants and established a new basis for determining them. Under the Act of 1921 the quotas of immigrants were limited to 3 per cent. of the nationals

the races of half the world are already within the citadel, multiplying rapidly. The races which pioneered America, however, the stock that built up the most progressive State the world has ever known, is slowly dying out.

The character of the people has changed of late years. The Anglo-Saxon—or perhaps we should say the Nordic—stock has contrived to remain in official control of the country only by bowing the knee to the more powerful of the other groups. And in a nutshell, this sets out the problem as it affects the Empire. The Dominions must have people, but if the Empire is to cohere, the vast bulk of these people must be British.

II

FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PRACTICAL POLITICS

Admitting that the Dominions can hold ten, perhaps twenty times their present population, that Britain has surplus millions for whom there is no prospect of employment, and that of these large numbers are willing to migrate, the question we must consider is, how fast can the Dominions absorb new people?

Enthusiasts speak as though it were possible to transplant vast multitudes from one side of the world to the other in a few months. But experience has shown that this is not practicable. People cannot be poured into a country as water is poured into a jug, stopping only when the vessel is full. If we are not to throw the national and economic life of the new country into confusion and make the last state of the migrant worse than the first, the volume of new-comers must not exceed of various countries residing in America by the census of 1910. The Johnson Act (1924) limited immigration to 2 per cent. of the nationals of various countries residing in the United States at the census of 1890, or a total maximum of not more than 164,000 per annum.

The net gain by immigration for the six years before restriction—1910–20 (war years omitted)—was 3,509,660; the net gain by immigration for the six years under the quota system (1922–7 inclusive) was 2,000,287, to which must be added surreptitious entries carefully estimated at 1,050,000, making a grand total of 3,050,287.

the country's power to assimilate them readily. This number will vary with the prosperity of the country and the amount of capital available for its further development.

But we must first catch the hare, and the supply of the right kind of migrant is limited. We have determined to welcome only one kind of migrant, but the kind of migrant we want does not always run to meet us, and sometimes he is very reluctant to leave his home, where, clinging tenaciously to the land where he was born, he will remain if he can obtain regular employment at decent wages. Life in the remote Dominions often strikes him as a minor sort of exile. He will not come when we beckon him unless we offer him some powerful inducement.

Now, a home of his own, land upon which he can settle and live, high wages, good industrial conditions, and wider opportunities for himself and for his children are the most potent inducements. The days of alluvial gold, which attracted to the country crowds of adventurous men, have for the time being gone, but the shining gates of opportunity are still wide open. And this is the essential thing; the wisest schemes, the smoothest-running machinery, the most practical and sympathetic administration, will fail unless the new land is not merely in name but in fact a land of opportunity where every man and woman has a chance. But granting that the Dominions are lands of opportunity, at what rate can they absorb migrants and still remain so? Normally the number ought to increase proportionately to the growth of population. Consider, for example, Australia, about which I am best equipped to speak: one would certainly expect that if Australia could absorb 382,741 migrants in the decade 1881-90, when her mean population was about 2,750,000, she would be able to absorb double that number when her population had reached 5,500,000. But the vital statistics tell a different story. The figures quoted show excess arrivals over departures during the seven decades 1850 to 1926 (war years excluded). They are very instructive.

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	Net Increase by Im- migration.	Average Yearly In- crease by Immigration.	Mean Population.	Number of Migrants per 1,000 of Population.
1851-60	600,000	60,000	807,500	75.5
1861-70	166,565	16,656	1,405,685	11.8
1871-80	191,804	19,180	1,946,171	9.8
1881-90	383,741	38,274	2,421,436	15.8
1891-1900	24,870	2,487	3,544,393	0.07
1901-10	40,484	4,048	4,085,747	0.09
1911-14	253,350	63,337	4,778,769	13.2
1921-6	214,543	35,757	5,811,377	6.1

Here we see that the migrant stream, instead of flowing evenly through the years, swells at times into a swift river which threatens to overflow, and at other times shrinks to a trickle, and for brief periods dries up completely.

The contrast between the figures for the two decades 1881-90 and 1901-10 and those for the preceding and succeeding periods is indeed staggering. After a net gain of 38,274 per annum for 1881-90, we get a beggarly average of 3,200, and this persisted for twenty years, during which the total net gain to the population by migration was only 65,300. Yet in the next four years 1911-14 (the last partly a war year) the net gain was 253,350, or an average of 63,337 per annum! These twenty years seem disproportionate in the picture. During the previous forty years migrants had streamed in, sometimes more rapidly than at others, but all through, the average for the period had been about 33,500 per annum; and then for twenty years only 3,200 migrants a year. It does not, as I have said, fit in, but we know some of the causes that helped to account for it.

The early 'nineties were years of a great depression largely caused by a policy of over-borrowing and wild speculation pursued during the previous decade. This led to inflated values and a fictitious prosperity that suddenly collapsed like a pricked bladder. The banks suspended payment; ruined merchants and traders filled the bankruptcy court, and the banks, foreclosing on mortgages, drove out of their stations, squatters who had

lorded it over the countryside. The streets were full of unemployed men. These were the bad old times when the sun of the young Colonies stood still and for a time threatened to set for ever. But this was a passing phase, and during the next ten years (1901-10) trade grew from £87,344,912 to £134,505,000, and total production, which for the ten years 1891-1900 had averaged £100,830,000, increased to an average of £150,000,000 for the decade 1901-10. But the increase in the net gain by migration for the decade from 24,870 to 40,485 was far from keeping pace with the prosperity of the country.

In the decade 1911-20, however, the tide turned, and the excess of arrivals over departures totalled 207,571. This was a great leap forward, but figures for the decade do not reveal the position truly, because six out of the ten years covered by the period were war years, when migration almost ceased. In the years 1911-14 the excess of arrivals over departures was 253,350! In other words, migration was nearly double what it had been in the 'eighties. But against this one has to remember that in those thirty years the population of Australia had doubled itself. If the ratio between the number of migrants and that of the population is to be regarded as a standard, the number of migrants during 1911-14 was only 80 per cent. of the number required to maintain the ratio established in 1881-90.

Summarised, the gain through migration during 1911-20 was over five times the gain during the previous decade, and nearly ten times the gain between 1890 and 1900. Excluding war years, and comparing the four years 1911-14 with the two previous decades, the net gain by immigration was ten times the gain of the 1890 period and six times the gain of 1901-10.

Turning to post-war years, we see that from 1921-26 the net gain by migration was 214,543, or an average of 35,900 per annum compared with 38,274 during the 1881-90 decade, and 63,337 per annum during the four pre-war years 1911-14. In other words, we see that in

1911-14, with a mean population of 4,750,000, our net yearly gain was 63,000, and in 1921-6, with a mean population of 5,811,000, the net gain was little more than half the 1911-14 figures.¹

Mr. C. H. Wickens (Commonwealth Statistician), to whom I am indebted for the figures given in this chapter, has computed that the ratio of net gain by migration for the sixty years 1861-1920, averaged 5.5 per 1,000 of the mean population, and regards this as the measure of Australia's power to absorb migrants. He considers that there is no justification for believing that we could steadily maintain any greater ratio. But we can hardly agree that a ratio computed from the figures of those sixty years measures Australia's normal capacity for absorbing migrants. Ebb and flow we must expect, but not tidal waves, nor the floor of the ocean deeps made dry land. This is not a cross-section of the normal economic life of Australia. An average calculated from two such widely different rates of intake cannot serve as a reliable standard.

We do not know Australia's present capacity for absorbing migrants. Throughout the world, conditions differ so greatly from conditions forty or even twenty-five years ago that comparisons are almost useless and ratios apt to mislead. How would a ratio computed from the net gain by migration during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century have helped to measure Australia's power of absorption during the next fifty years—1851-1900? Up to 1850 the population of Australia was almost stationary. In seventy years the net gain by migration and natural increase had averaged less than 6,000 a year.

Though the country was standing on the threshold of a new era, who could have foreseen that during the next ten years the population would increase by migration alone at the rate of 60,000 a year, and that during the next forty-year period (1851-90) the net gain would average 33,500 per annum? Anyway, if we take the forty years from 1851-90 we get a very different ratio. Instead of

¹ The ratio of migrants to population is set out in the table on page 385.

5.5 per 1,000 we have 21 per 1,000. Why should we not regard the ratio of the net gain during those years as the measure of Australia's capacity for absorbing migrants? Is it not at least as probable that the next twenty years, when the net gain to population from immigration fell from 12.8 to 0.08 per 1,000, were abnormal?

It is true, of course, that the discovery of gold in 1851-60 attracted immigrants in greater numbers during certain years of this decade than in any subsequent years. But the great point is that the country absorbed them, and that although not one in ten, probably not one in a hundred, made more than decent wages, there was no reaction. This gargantuan feast was not followed by a famine. The flow of migrants did not become the merest trickle, as it did in the decades 1891-1900 and 1901-10. For the next thirty years migrants poured into the country at the rate of 24,700 per annum, a ratio of 12.8 per 1,000 of the mean population. In any case, why should we exclude the decade 1851-60 in computing the ratio of net gain by migration to the mean population when that ratio is to serve as a measure of Australia's capacity to absorb migrants? And if it is included, we get a ratio of net gain by migration during the period of seventy-two years (1851-1926)—excluding the war years—of 8.14 per 1,000 of mean population. The difference between these two ratios, 5.5 and 8.14, in the absorbent capacity of Australia is most striking and gives us a very vivid impression of the influence of the discovery of gold upon this development. Seventy years have passed away, yet the inclusion of the migrants during that decade nearly doubles the ratio.

The Golden Age has passed, it is not likely to recur. But other conditions not less attractive and providing opportunities for the absorption of migrants may arise or be created by deliberate policy. What alluvial gold did in the middle of the last century oil may do tomorrow. The discovery of oil in payable quantities would enormously stimulate Australia's absorbent capacity. Whether we shall strike oil or not remains

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to be seen. Perhaps it is not there. But oil or no oil, the country has wonderful resources and the number of migrants it can absorb depends almost entirely upon the rate at which these are developed. Given capital to speed up this development, its absorbent capacity can be very greatly increased,¹ without more capital it is limited.

CANADA

Before the war the flow ² of immigrants into Canada was considerable. During the years 1911-14 an average of between 300,000 and 400,000 entered the Dominion yearly. In post-war years this number has markedly fallen. During the three years 1920-22 the average influx declined to 118,000 per annum, or about one-third of the pre-war number. But the outstanding fact about Canadian immigration is not the decline in the number of arrivals, but the net loss of population through an excess of departures over arrivals. During the decade 1901-11 the net gain by migration was nearly 1,000,000. Although in subsequent years migrants came to Canada, they did not remain there, flowing from Canada to the United States like water poured into a sieve. The figures are most disturbing.

Canada lost on an average 200,000 people a year during the decade 1911-21. And this is still going on. Recent figures show a net loss of 7,000 through excess of departures over arrivals during the five years 1923-7. People are going out of Canada faster than people are entering it.

SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa the excess of arrivals for the six years 1920-25 averaged, according to official returns, approxi-

¹ In marked industrial depression, while this lasts the capacity of the country to absorb migrants is considerably lowered. The Economic Mission in its report states that Australia's present absorbent capacity is very limited.

² As Canadian statistics only record departures by sea, it is impossible to ascertain the net gain to the population through migration.

mately 4,500 per annum, but Mr. Fleetwood Chidell quotes authorities to show that white emigration exceeds white immigration. Emigrants without capital are not encouraged. And this seems to bear out his contention that the poor white class is increasing.

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand returns are much more satisfactory. They show that the net gain by migration over a period of fifty years (1871-1920) has been 319,775, and that in the six years 1920-25 arrivals exceeded departures by 60,000, or an average of 10,000 per annum, which gives a ratio of 8.9 migrants per 1,000 of population for the period 1870-80, of 7.7 per 1,000 of population for the six years 1920-25, and of 7.95 per 1,000 over the whole period 1871-1926.

SUMMARY

This is the story, told, except in the case of Australia, in bald outline. Migration has added to the population of the Dominions about 1,900,000 souls¹ during the first

¹ Mr. C. H. Wickens has worked out the rate of increase for 22 countries, and his figures are very well worth quoting. We learn that during the forty years 1881-1920 inclusive, population in only one country in the world increased at a faster rate than Australia's. The following table sets out the rate of increase per 1,000 of population in the Dominions:

New Zealand	.	.	23	per thousand per annum
Australia	.	.	22	" " " "
Canada	.	.	18	" " " "
South Africa	.	.	?	

For comparison, the rate of increase in some of the principal countries of the world is set out hereunder:

United States	.	.	19	per thousand per annum
Japan.	.	.	12	" " " "
England and Wales	.	.	9	" " " "
Germany	.	.	8	" " " "
Italy	.	.	7	" " " "
France	.	.	1	" " " "

MIGRATION

quarter of the twentieth century. Even the greatest optimist will hardly regard this as satisfactory. But let us look at it against a background which will enable us to appreciate its significance in truer perspective.

NATIONALITY OF MIGRANTS

How many of these migrants with which the Dominions have buttressed their populations came from Britain? Consider once more Australia, which has always boasted that she, like New Zealand, was more British than Britain herself.

AUSTRALIA

During the period 1910-14 migrants of British stock numbered 276,922, or 91 per cent. of the total excess of arrivals over departures. In the five years 1923-7 the number of British migrants had declined to 178,476, or 82.9 per cent. of the total excess of arrivals over departures. British migrants to Australia have decreased by 33 per cent., and other Northern Europeans have decreased by 50 per cent., while the number of migrants from Europe nearly trebled.¹

CANADA

From 1900 to 1926 3,832,000 migrants entered Canada, and of these 1,567,000, or 41 per cent., were of British origin, 1,383,000, or 36 per cent., from the United States, and 883,000, or 23 per cent., from foreign countries. Out of a total of 96,000 immigrants to Canada in 1926, 40,000 were of foreign origin, 18,788 came from the United States, and 37,000 from Britain. In other words, in 1926 less than 40 per cent. were British. The nationalities of the 18,788 migrants from the United States were not given, but we may assume that a considerable percentage would be non-British.

¹ The number of Southern European migrants during the two periods were: 1910-14, 10,236, and 1923-7, 29,545.

On the assumption that half were of British descent, the percentage of foreign migrants to Canada in 1926 would be about 60 per cent.

SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Year-Book does not give the nationality of migrants into the Union, but from the British figures we gather that in the five years 1921-5 112,086 migrants left Britain for South Africa. Assuming that the efflux of persons of British origin was proportionate to the influx, which for the five-year period was 143,763, the net gain by migration would seem to be largely British, but without more exact information we cannot speak certainly.

NEW ZEALAND

With New Zealand, we tread upon firmer ground and look upon a prospect altogether pleasing, for during the past twenty years the proportion of British migrants has been between 93 and 94 per cent.

NATIONALITY OF DOMINION POPULATION

The people of Australia are remarkably homogeneous. Just what percentage is unmixed British cannot be precisely stated, as the Statistical Bureau has not endeavoured to ascertain the racial origin of persons who after naturalisation have become an integral part of the community. But as until 1900 about 97 per cent. of the migrants were of British stock, the admixture of other racial stocks cannot be considerable. At the 1921 census 99 per cent. of the population were definitely stated to be British subjects. Of these, 84.51 per cent. were born in Australia, 12.48 per cent. on the British Isles, and 0.71 per cent. in New Zealand. So that in 1921, 97.70 per cent. of the total population had been born either in Australasia or the British Isles. The Australian people, then, are overwhelmingly British.

Of New Zealand's people, 75 per cent. were born in the country, 23 per cent. are natives of either the British

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Isles or other British Dominions, and only 2 per cent. are of foreign origin.

The great bulk of the population of Canada is divided into two racial groups—British and French. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century the proportion of persons of other nationalities was small. Since 1871, however, each census has shown that these are increasing.

At the census of 1871 60·55 per cent. of the population were of British stock, 31·07 per cent. French, and 8·38 foreign. At the 1901 census the percentages were 57·03 British, 30·70 French, and 12·27 foreign. The 1921 census showed that the percentage of British had declined to 55·40, of French to 27·91, and the percentage of persons of foreign origin had increased to 16·69, or about double what it had been in 1871.

The actual numbers of the different racial groups at the 1921 census were: British, 4,868,000; French, 2,452,000; foreign, 1,400,000. The Immigration returns for the years 1921–6 show that the percentage of foreigners in the population of Canada is still increasing.

IV

ASSISTED MIGRATION

In 1922 the Empire Settlement Act, which empowered the British Government to co-operate with any Dominion Government in any scheme mutually agreed upon, passed into law. The Act authorised the Government to contribute up to one-half expended under any scheme, but limited the amount to £1,500,000 for the first year, and £3,000,000 for any subsequent year, exclusive of any sums received as repayment for advances.

As a result of negotiations the British and Dominion Governments agreed upon the Empire Migration Scheme, the Assisted Passages Agreement, and for Australia, the Migration and Settlement Agreement (1925).¹ These provide the machinery for State-aided migration within

¹ It has recently been decided to make certain amendments in this agreement, and these will be incorporated in a Supplementary Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States. Under the existing Agree-

the Empire. The Migration and Settlement Agreement is perhaps too recent to be evaluated, but the Empire Migration Scheme and the Assisted Passages Agreement have been working for nearly six years, and we are able to form some idea of the extent to which they have stimulated migration.

The total net gain by migration to the Dominions during the first five-year period covered by the scheme 1922 to the end of 1927 was 277,000. Of this number 254,272 were British migrants brought out under the Empire Migration Scheme. They were distributed among the various Dominions as follows: Canada, 75,005; Australia, 141,075; New Zealand, 38,629; South Africa, 563. Comparing these figures (excluding those for South Africa) with the figures for the five pre-war years 1910-14, it will be seen that the number of migrants has declined by 593,700. Viewed from any angle, the position is scarcely satisfactory, but with all the facts it becomes distinctly disquieting.

We had been led to expect that the Empire Migration Scheme would substantially increase the number of British migrants, and effect a more even distribution of the white population of the Empire. But after five years we find that the population of Britain has increased by over a million, the percentage of unemployed remains abnormally high, and the number of migrants is less than half the 1910-14 figure! As we look upon these statistics and recall those stirring speeches which launched

ment, which relates to advances for developmental public works schemes, for every advance of £75 made to a State, the State is required to absorb one assisted migrant within ten years from April 8th, 1925, and to include in such assisted migrants a specified number of members of families. Under Clause 18, which authorises advances for the settlement of migrants upon farms, for every £1,000 advanced to a State the State is required to establish one new farm, to allot at least one-half of these farms to assisted migrants, and to introduce within twelve months of the issue of the loan one migrant family. This figure of £1,000 will be raised to £1,500 in the supplementary agreement, which, resulting from negotiations at the Imperial Conference 1926, the States are about to accept (November 1928).

the Empire Scheme and conjured up visions of millions of eager Britons preparing for the great trek to the Dominions, we feel a little subdued.

What is the cause of this relatively poor response? When emigrants were herded like cattle in dark, unsavoury holds and the voyage lasted four or five times as long as it does to-day, they left England in crowds. Now, when America closes her gates against them and the Dominions fling theirs open, they scarcely trickle out of Britain. Is there something that needs to be done which the Empire Migration Scheme does not do, or cannot under existing conditions do efficiently? Let us consider this closely.

INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS AND MIGRATION

British trade has been more or less depressed during the greater part of the post-war period, and British migration statistics for a period of years seem to indicate that the tide of emigration rises with good and falls with bad trade. One does not quite see why this should be so, unless we are to assume that the only thing that keeps the Briton in his island home is lack of the money to get out of it.¹ But that unflattering theory would scarcely explain the decline in post-war migration, for under the Assisted Passages Agreement, British migrants can go to Canada for a very small sum. But whatever effect prosperity or depression in Britain exercises upon migration, there can be no doubt that economic conditions in the Dominions profoundly influence the mind of the prospective migrant. People go to a new country to better their conditions. In other words, we expect to find that when the percentage of unemployment in the Dominions is high, immigration will be low. An attempt to establish a relation between

¹ Sir John Marriott (*Empire Settlement*, page 68) inclines to the opinion that this paradox, rightly interpreted, ought perhaps to inspire confidence in the future of the new Britains beyond the seas, because it suggests that it is not the hopeless, the down-and-outs, who are disposed to emigrate, but those in whom the springs of hopefulness are not dry; and hopefulness is an indispensable element of success in any emigrant.

unemployment and immigration by a study of the statistical returns seems, however, to lead to an inconclusive result. The figures show that a high percentage of unemployment has on more than one occasion coincided with a high level of immigration.

Professor Copland, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce at the Melbourne University, recently presented a report on Unemployment to the Development and Migration Commission (Australia), in which he traces the relations between migration and unemployment. This report shows that there have been occasions when unemployment was low and migration high, and others when migration was low and unemployment high.

"What seems to emerge from a consideration of the question," he says, "is that immigration is not a fundamental cause of unemployment, and that the flow of migration into a country will to a great extent adjust itself to the economic conditions of that country."

I am inclined to agree with Professor Copland's conclusion. If, as a fact, a high level of immigration and unemployment have synchronised, the relation is not casual. Probably the explanation is that immigrants made their arrangements to migrate before the depression developed, or before they had heard of it.¹ Alternatively they came to settle upon the land, and so would not be materially affected by a temporary period of unemployment in the secondary industries. But unemployment in the country of destination certainly deters prospective migrants, and prosperity encourages them. And, of course, any industrial depression that throws large numbers of men on the labour market quickly reacts upon political parties. Every shipload of migrants aggravates the situation and Governments exert themselves to discourage migration.

¹ The majority of the migrants to Australia are "nominated" by relatives or friends already there; these contribute towards the passage money and undertake some responsibility for the migrants' maintenance for some months after their arrival. Frequently they provide them with employment or put them in the way of getting it.

M I G R A T I O N

The economic conditions in Australia during the period 1922-7 have been fair. We have endured seasonal depressions, partial failures of the wheat harvest, and local droughts, but over the whole period the wool clips and wheat yields have been normal, and on the whole manufacturers have prospered. The percentage of unemployment has not been unusually high.

If the net gain to Australia by migration has declined, no one can reasonably contend that industrial conditions are responsible.¹

The following table sets out the position in detail for the period under review.

Australia: Population, beginning of 1923	5,633,281
Australia: Population, end of 1927	6,260,000

Production.	1923.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.
Agricultural (millions of £)	84.1	81.1	107.1	89.2	98.2
Pastoral (millions of £)	97.0	110.0	126.7	113.3	112.0
Manufactures (millions of £)					
(value added in process)	131.7	141.2	147.1	155.4	162.3
Net gain to population by migration	41,784	43,749	37,357	37,587	49,702(a)
Ratio of migrants per 1,000 of population . .	6.5	7.4	6.2	6.9	7.9
Percentage of trade-unionists unemployed in Australia	7.1	8.1	8.1	7.1	6.9

(a) 30,123 migrants were assisted.

PROPORTION OF FOREIGN MIGRANTS INCREASING

And there is another point we must not overlook. Though foreign migrants are not encouraged—if they go to the Dominions they do so at their own expense, and Australia does not admit them unless they have £40 each

¹ In 1928 the percentage of unemployed was abnormally high (10.7 per cent.) and the number of migrants for the months January-March was 1,000 less than the number for the corresponding months in 1927. Mr. Amery estimates that the number of migrants to Australia during 1929 will be 10,000 less than in 1928.

—they are entering the Dominions in greater and greater volume, and one thing is certain, whatever industrial conditions in the Dominions may be, the infiltration of migrants from countries with a low standard of living will inevitably tend to make them worse. On this the attitude of organised labour in the Dominions is very definite. If there is to be migration at all, Labour prefers that it should be British.

A PARTY QUESTION

This brings us to one of the reasons why Empire migration is not more successful: the net of party politics has enmeshed it. Migration schemes are not judged upon their merits, but from the standpoint of party. Migration is a question of fundamental importance; it concerns both Capital and Labour vitally. Each party views with suspicion migration proposals emanating from or approved by the other. In the modern world what we call the Industrial or Labour Question is the Aaron's rod which has swallowed up all other rods. Everywhere the forces of Labour and Capital are organised, and in Britain and the Dominions they are organised politically as well as industrially. Time may evolve a *modus vivendi* between them, but at present they are like men at the opposite poles of the earth. The issues that divide them go down to the very roots of human nature.

At the back of the minds of the extremists in the ranks of Labour is a fixed idea that all this talk about migration and the Empire is only a cunning dodge of the capitalist to flood the labour markets of the Dominions and to hamstring the British Labour Party politically. How the representatives of capital regard it we need not inquire, but we may be quite sure that, being like those of Labour, very human, they too look at this great question through the glasses of their own interests. Of course there are sensible, level-headed men in both parties, but their counsels do not always prevail.

MIGRATION

In such an environment the British Migration Scheme¹ was evolved. It bears on it the brand of its origin—it is a compromise upon a compromise. It is an agreement between the British and various Dominion Governments, each of which had its eye upon its own particular Parliament and its own special circumstances. It was designed to encourage British migration to the Dominions, but not to encourage it unduly. The British Labour Party had to be assured that migration would not seriously weaken its political strength, and the Labour parties of the Dominions that the Labour market would not be flooded. The administration of the scheme has been attuned to this minor key.

Speaking before the Constitutional Club on his return from a visit to the Dominions, Sir Robert Horne² said that he almost despaired of the migration movement. Thirty-four millions were earmarked for the purpose of encouraging and assisting migration to the Dominions. It was intended to spread these millions over a period of ten years. Nearly six years had passed, but although fifteen millions were available, only two millions had been spent.

¹ The 170,728 migrants (net gain 141,000) who came to Australia under the scheme, or during the period the scheme was operating, cost on an average £10 per head—that is to say, the overwhelming bulk of them received nothing more than part-payment of their passage money. As a fact, the majority of them were “nominated” by friends or relatives in the Commonwealth. These nominators, acting as economic sponsors, guardians, and protectors, put them in a way of obtaining employment without disorganising the labour market. What assistance these migrants received from Britain was under the Assisted Passages Agreement—a subsidiary, unambitious, but most useful scheme. Approximately half the moneys paid for passages for these migrants was found by the nominators or by the migrants themselves, the balance by Britain, the Commonwealth, and the States. Before the British Government took the matter in hand, assisted immigration had been operating in Australia for half a century. If Britain retired from the field now, the States, or some of them, would, no doubt, continue to assist desirable British migrants, as they have been doing for so long. The amount of money involved is not very considerable. If, for example, Australia bore the whole of the cost of bringing out the 170,728 migrants who came to Australia during 1922–7, she would have to find only £1,707,280, or £342,000 per annum.

² Formerly Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"The situation," he went on to say, "is disgraceful. We are supposed to be a practical country, yet this is all we have done." And Sir Robert added that he would shortly move in the House of Commons that the Oversea Committee be given power to spend all the money available, whether anybody else gave pound for pound or not.

Half-hearted administration has no doubt contributed to the indifferent success of the Empire Migration Scheme. It is well enough in its way, but there is no driving force behind it. Its financial backing is as pitifully inadequate as would be the steam from a donkey-engine to drive the turbines of a great ocean liner.

Other factors that have helped to decrease the flow of British migrants to the Dominions more effective administration of the Empire Migration Scheme can hardly touch. If we examine the position from the British and Dominion angles, we will understand just what Empire migration needs for a reasonable chance of success.

LAND SETTLEMENT

Take the Dominions angle first. Empire migration connotes more than the mere transference of people from one part of the Empire to another. We cannot dump the migrants down in the Dominions, disorganising economic conditions and throwing upon the young communities the burden of maintaining the strangers; we must put them where they can produce wealth. The central idea of the Empire Migration Scheme was Land Settlement, which assured organised Labour in the Dominions that it would not be swamped by imported labour and satisfied those people in Britain who consider that the Dominions should confine themselves to producing raw materials and leave manufacturing to the Old Country.

But after five years of this scheme, Britain has at least a million more people and fewer people are on the land in Australia.¹

¹ The number of persons engaged in pastoral and agricultural pursuits

This suggests that something is radically wrong either with the land or the people of Australia. But nothing is wrong with either. The soil is fertile, and men do at least as well upon the land here as anywhere in the world. And although it is quite true the tendency to flock to the great cities, which is a world-wide phenomenon, is marked in Australia, yet it is also true that the earth-hunger of the Australian is far from satisfied. Given certain conditions, he is eager to go upon the land. Whenever great holdings are cut up for closer settlement or whenever there is a ballot for Crown lands, there are hundreds of applicants for every block. So if land settlement lags in Australia, it is not for lack of people willing and anxious to go on the land.

It is beyond the scope of this book to deal with the problem of land settlement in detail. But stated broadly, the reasons why land settlement does not progress more rapidly may be grouped under two heads :

1. The effect of modern methods of production upon industry generally, and upon agriculture in particular.
2. The economic conditions under which agriculture is carried on in Australia.

EFFECT OF MODERN METHODS

The growth of cities, which it is customary to deplore as a sign of degeneracy, is a stage in the world's progress. in the Commonwealth in 1922 was 478,000 ; in 1927 this had declined to 425,000.

It is not suggested that many of the 141,000 migrants who came to Australia during the years 1922-7 did not settle upon the land. But if and when they did they merely displaced other settlers, some of whom no doubt retired to the cities to live, for a season at all events, upon the money they received from the new-comers for their farms. In some States—e.g. Western Australia—the number of people upon the land increased.

Returns supplied by the Migration and Development Commission show that 2,224 new settlers (9,415 souls) were placed on the lands, mainly in Western Australia, during the period under review, so it is scarcely fair to say that the Migration Scheme has settled no one. As a set-off against this there was, however, a decrease in land settlement in other States.

Modern methods of production have revolutionised industry and made a redistribution of population inevitable. No longer need 75 per cent. of the population toil from daylight to dark to produce enough food for themselves and the rest of the community. Ten men can produce as much to-day as fifty or a hundred could produce in the pre-machine era, and that is why relatively fewer men work on the land.¹ And as time passes the productivity of labour increases. Better methods are being continuously evolved, more efficient machinery made available. In fifty years' time probably one man will produce as much as two or three produce now, and this will involve another redistribution of population.

But it does not follow that we should cease to regard as food producers men who have escaped into new occupations from the life of tillage and sowing to which the old order would have bound them. Modern methods of production involve greater subdivision of labour than formerly, and this is one of the causes which inspire the drift to the cities. Before the machine era practically all the people who produced the food of the community lived on the land and engaged directly in its cultivation. They were farmers and stock-raisers. The implements they used were simple and inexpensive, requiring the labour of few men. Expensive and complex machinery manufactured in great factories, employing thousands of men and involving an outlay of a great amount of capital, has replaced those primitive implements that cost a few pounds. The Man with the Hoe typified the Old Order; the bent back and hopeless look of subjection stood for an order in which unending and ill-paid toil by the great majority of the population scarcely provided a meagre dietary for all. Man was then the Slave of Nature; he is now its Master. The Man with the Hoe has been replaced by the Man on the Tractor,

¹ In 1901, 387,000 persons employed in agricultural and pastoral pursuits produced £70,000,000 (approximately). In 1927, 425,187 persons employed in the same industries produced £294,282,000 (approximately).

and in place of the sickle and scythe we have the reaper and binder and the harvester.

Thus agriculture is becoming a machine industry.¹ We see machines capable of dropping a bag of wheat a minute, and of harvesting thirty acres in a day of eight hours. In Australia the farmer can deliver the wheat, threshed, winnowed, and bagged, to the storage silos at the railway-depot twenty miles from the homestead, or to the trucks ready for shipment to Europe, within an hour of closing the day's work in the fields. Applied science, machinery, motor and rail transport, have made this miracle possible. And if we are to make a fair comparison between the past and the present, we must include the men who make these wonderful machines which have revolutionised the work of the farmer. These and the men engaged in transport are the new farm labourers. They do not work on the farm; but without them, the farmer would be where he was a hundred years ago; but for their help, work on the farm could not be carried on at all events in countries like Australia where the holdings are large.

WHY MEN DO NOT GO ON THE LAND

But while this explains why a smaller percentage of people is now needed to produce food for the community, it does not help us to understand why, in a country like Australia, more people do not settle upon the land. It has been estimated that there are at least 260,000,000 acres of land suitable for wheat-growing in the Commonwealth, of which not more than 35,000,000 acres are cultivated to-day. The population of the

¹ Before many years have passed, large farms will be run like factories. Some of them are so now. Machine methods appeal to a type of man different from the old-fashioned farmer. And since machines and modern methods are setting the pace of the industry and determining the cost of production, it is inevitable that those whose minds are rooted in the past, or have not sufficient capital to obtain the best machinery and use the best methods, must go to the wall. This accounts for many of the failures to make good on the land.

world is increasing, everywhere men are insisting upon a better dietary, the demand for wheat is becoming more insistent.¹ Within a comparatively short space of time America will cease to be a wheat-exporting country owing to the increase of population.

CAPITAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL WANTED

Why, then, do not more people go upon the lands of Australia? There are many reasons.

One is that farming is a business requiring a considerable amount of capital. The dream of the storm-beaten sailor of one day being able to leave the sea and buy a farm upon which he may pass the remainder of his days in Arcadian bliss is nowadays hardly ever realised. Here and there, exceptional men, after many years of unbroken toil and hardship, have made a success of farming without capital, or with very little. But for

¹ An economic superabundance of wheat may be produced as a result of good seasons and expectation of high prices. The estimates for the present year (1928) point to increased surpluses in Canada and the Argentine, and this is already being reflected in lower prices, which may not allow of a sufficient margin of profit, or may even fall below the cost of production. But these conditions will probably right themselves next season—farmers will sow a smaller area of wheat, the next crop will be less, and prices will rise in sympathy. It remains true, nevertheless, that in years of superabundant supply—so-called—there are tens of millions of people who do not get enough wheat. They want wheat, but they cannot afford to buy it.

As their conditions improve (and all the world over the standard of living is improving) the economic demand for wheat—that is to say, the demand backed by the money to satisfy it—will increase. Along with the growth of population this ensures a steady and profitable market for wheat. In the meantime, a fall in the price of wheat may spell ruin to thousands of farmers, and tend to discourage land settlement.

In certain districts of New South Wales, areas formerly under wheat are now used for stock-raising, owing to the increased cost of production. On the other hand, the area under wheat in Western Australia has been very greatly increased. Over the whole of the Commonwealth the acreage under crop (wheat and oats) increased from 8,831,000 acres in 1901 to 17,772,000 acres in 1927, wheat from 5,115,965 acres with a yield of 36,000,000 bushels in 1901 to 11,687,919 acres with a yield of 160,761,000 bushels in 1927.

every one that wins through under such circumstances, ten go down.

Lack of capital is one great reason why land settlement lags, but possession of capital is not enough—there must also be specialised knowledge, skill, and natural aptitude. Farming is no longer a rule-of-thumb business; a farmer must be a skilled workman, understand machinery,¹ and have some knowledge of agricultural science. He must be prepared to work long hours, to fight against pests, floods, and droughts.

THE PROBLEM OF MARKETS

But given capital, practical knowledge, skill, energy, and abounding hopefulness, there remains one thing more. The farmer has not only to grow wheat, but to sell it² at a price that leaves him a fair margin of profit over the cost of production. Wages, rent, interest, transport charges, depreciation of plant—all have to be carefully considered. Of these items, wages, rent and/or interest, are the most important. Wages in Australia are very high, much higher than in most other wheat-exporting countries. Then there is the price of land.

¹ Wool growing and cattle raising, dairying and fruit growing, are not so dependent upon machinery as is wheat growing, but all these have their own problems: for example, distance from markets makes freezing essential, and frozen meat is at a disadvantage compared to chilled meat from the Argentine and live-stock from Canada. In fruit growing, marketing is the great difficulty.

² In Australia the pooling system, established during the war, has taken a firm hold. "Wheat pools" may be either compulsory or voluntary—that is to say, the individual farmers may be compelled to place their wheat in a pool or they may be allowed to use their own discretion. Under both systems the management of the "pool" is vested in a Committee of Management. This Committee, or Executive, or Board of Control, makes all the arrangements for storing, distributing, shipping, and selling the wheat, the farmer receiving the net price per bushel the season's wheat fetches. Advances are made to the farmer upon the security of the wheat, and the balance is paid in instalments as sales are made. He gets everything the wheat fetches less the cost of running the pool. There are no middlemen's profits.

The settler can get Crown lands for very little, from 10s. to £1 per acre; but except in Western Australia, this is only possible in the comparatively dry and remote areas. Elsewhere good wheat lands fetch from £5 to £25 per acre, and prices are steadily rising.

Dear land is one of the greatest deterrents to land settlement. All over the world land values are increasing as a result of the growth of the population and improved methods of production. The owners of the land contribute something to the added values, but the greater part of the increase is due to the growth of the community and the expenditure of public moneys on roads, railways, and other public works.

All this tends to discourage land settlement. Given certain conditions¹ the number of persons employed in rural industries can be considerably increased, but the percentage engaged in the primary industries to the total population is hardly likely to be substantially increased.

Migration schemes must be attuned to the circumstances of the country. What those of Australia are we have already outlined, but additional emphasis of one of its outstanding features is perhaps desirable. The dominant note in the national life of Australia during the last quarter of a century has been the great advance made by the manufacturing industries. When Federation was established in 1901, the population of Australia was 3,800,000; in 1927 it had grown to 6,110,000. In 1901 the number of persons employed in agricultural and pastoral pursuits was 387,000, in 1922 it was 478,000, by 1927 it had fallen to 425,000; so that while the population had increased by 2,110,000, the number of persons employed in these industries had only increased by 38,000, and during the last five years, during which the population increased by approximately half a million, had actually decreased by 53,000.

¹ Cheap land is one of the essentials to successful wheat growing for export. Millions of acres of land with good rainfall suitable for wheat can be had in Western Australia (vide pages 391 and 401).

On the other hand, the number of persons employed in the manufacturing industries has increased from 270,000 in 1901 to 467,000 in 1927—an increase of 197,000. It is therefore obvious that if Australia has been able to absorb an additional 2,400,000 people in the last quarter of a century, it is only because of the steady and rapid expansion of her manufacturing industries.

But this does not complete the story. Whatever progress land settlement has made during recent years has been mainly due to the inducements which an ever-growing population chiefly absorbed in manufacturing industries has provided.

The Australian farmer's best market is at his own door. He sells about 60 per cent. of his wheat, 80 per cent. of his meat, 95 per cent. of his bacon and hams, 95 per cent. of his sugar, 90 per cent. of his fresh fruits, nearly 50 per cent. of his dried fruits, 66 per cent. of his butter, and 80 per cent. of his cheese in the Australian market.

We must face the facts. It is puerile bewailing the drift to the cities. People go where life offers most attractions. If we want to encourage land settlement, life on the land must be made profitable. It ought to be made—it can be made—pleasant too. But it must be made profitable. One of the best ways of ensuring this is by the development of the home market. Men live by producing things that others need. Every unit added to the community is a customer for the products of the man on the land. The more people we can get into the country—provided they can be absorbed without disturbing the labour market—the greater will be the number of persons able to make a profitable living producing the commodities the community requires. Increase the population and land settlement will progress.

Of course, the home market does not exhaust the possibilities of land settlement, but the stronger the local demand the better able the settler will be to compete in the oversea markets. And as I show later, he gets short shrift even in Empire markets.

LAND SETTLEMENT AND THE MIGRANT

The problem is complex and difficult, but one point I hope I have made clear: it is futile to attempt to settle British migrants upon the lands of Australia unless they have adequate capital, an inclination for rural life, some practical knowledge of farming, and determination to succeed. The last is vital; in the problem of migration the migrant is the dominant factor. People sometimes criticise the Dominions for setting too high a standard for migrants, for insisting upon the cream of British stock rather than accepting a fair average quality. Upon this point plain speaking is best—the Dominions do not seek the cream, but they are determined they will not accept the dregs of the British peoples. And this applies not only to the physical but to the moral qualities of the migrant. We want men and women who are not only sound in body, but have stout hearts and strong characters. In these new lands there is no place for weaklings.

And to correct what I hope is not a very general impression, let me say here,¹ the people of Australia do not turn sullen faces upon British migrants. On the contrary, they are anxious to receive them. But the Australian is very proud of his country, and he is annoyed when people who have not been there more than a few weeks or months speak disparagingly of it, blaming it instead of themselves for their failure. If the migrant smiles, the people of the Dominions will smile with him and readily help him.

LAND SETTLEMENT AND FINANCE

These essentials to success are outside any migration scheme, but they are the raw materials without which no scheme will succeed. We can, however, analyse one side of this business, which is very much the affair of those who would evolve a scheme to solve the problem of land

¹ Dean Inge, in a recent article, stated that the Dominions did not want British migrants, and gave them a frosty welcome. The Dean has been misinformed.

settlement on a grand scale, which means production of food and other raw materials for sale in the markets of the world. Land settlement costs a great deal of money, and if we are to direct it on a scale commensurate with the circumstances of the Empire, a very great deal of money. The financial backing of the Empire Migration Scheme was, as we have said, pitifully inadequate. The total amount actually expended to the middle of 1928, according to Sir Robert Horne, was about £2,600,000, which, spread over the 266,000 migrants who went to the Dominions during the period 1922-7, amounted to a little over £9 per head. It is true that something better is contemplated, but six precious years have brought us nothing, although hardly a week has passed without its stirring post-prandial oration on Empire migration. One is beginning to doubt whether anything worthy of a great Empire and of the greatest colonising people the world has ever known will be done. It certainly will not be done unless we go to work earnestly. Great things are possible if we attack the problem in the right way, but this means a vastly greater expenditure than anyone has contemplated. Without adequate capital settlement, schemes must fail, and in this we do not preach what we are afraid to practise.

When the men who had fought in the World War were being demobilised, the Commonwealth Government included in its repatriation policy a comprehensive scheme of Soldier Land Settlement. Under that scheme, 36,310 returned men were placed on agricultural, orchard, and grazing blocks. The Government advanced money for the purchase of stock, machinery, and farm implements, and gave a sustenance allowance for the first six months to tide the men over the non-productive period. This scheme cost the Commonwealth over £35,000,000.¹

Contrast this land settlement scheme undertaken by

¹ There has been a fair percentage of failures amongst the soldier settlers. Some of these have been due to bad seasons, others to difficulties of marketing the products of the orchards. In others the overhead expenses were too high—cost of land. But the majority of the settlers are doing well.

six millions of people with the scheme for which the British Government, representing forty-four millions, is responsible. Six millions of people spend over £35,000,000, and forty-four millions spend £2,600,000 (see Appendix, "Report of Industrial Transference Board").

EFFECT OF THE DOLE

Thus we see the problem of migration from the standpoint of the Dominions. Look now at the obverse side of the shield and examine the question from the standpoint of Britain. Land settlement is only one phase of migration, though one of the most important. The real problem is to shift the surplus millions of overcrowded Britain to the underpopulated Dominions. The problem involves three operations—the marshalling of the millions, their transport overseas, and their absorption into the new community. The most important factor in any scheme of migration is the migrant; unless a sufficient supply of the right quality is available, the scheme cannot succeed.

A scheme under which population pours into Britain four times as fast as it goes out is worse than useless as a means of dealing with surplus millions, but that, as I have said, is precisely what has happened under the Empire Migration Scheme.

The scheme, however, is not primarily responsible for the failure to marshal the millions. The main reason why so few British people have gone to the Dominions in the past six years is summed up in two words: "the dole." A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush—especially if the bush is in Australia, 12,000 miles away. The potential migrant is, in fact, far too comfortable in Capua to entertain seriously the idea of doubtful adventures in distant lands. Pilgrimages are no longer the fashion.

The dole is undermining the national character of the British people. Recently it was stated that in Glasgow alone were 5,000 young men of twenty-five years of age who had never done a day's work. They were on the dole,

and the only way they could remain on it was to do no work. If, grown tired of uneventful idleness, they ventured to work, even for one day, they were struck off the dole.

Of course the conditions created by the World War which threw the nation economically and socially into confusion called for desperate remedies. Millions were unemployed. They could not be allowed to starve. But ten years have passed since the Armistice, and the world has become almost normal again. But the dole continues. Are we to accept it as a permanent institution of British life? Insurance against unemployment is good, but normally unemployment is a temporary evil to which all are liable, not a permanent condition to which some are condemned for life.

The trouble in Britain is not that men are unemployed through temporary slackness in trade, but that millions have not, nor ever will have, any hope of employment. The dole cannot cure, but it can and does aggravate the disease by seriously lowering the vitality of the people. Its baneful influence falls alike upon those who give and those who take.

Consider those 5,000 young men of Glasgow, and the tens of thousands more throughout Britain "who do no work to-day," who are condemned to live drab, uneventful lives. Those tens of thousands upon whom the doors of opportunity are barred—what is to become of them? Or of the community in which they dwell like economic lepers, spreading the disease to those not yet tainted? The character of her people, their initiative, resource, love of adventure, courage, and tenacity of purpose made Britain a great world-Power. And these qualities alone can keep her great. Not even the burden of the greatest debt ever borne by any people has been able to crush her, but unless she can wean the community from this poisonous drug she will lose her place among the nations. Kill the habit of industry, and Britain is doomed.

Two millions spent to give men and women a chance

in life and two hundred and fifty millions to intern them in an economic lazarette! Surely British statesmen can do something better than this! But they will do nothing practical and adequate until the people of Britain realise the importance of migration. And when they do they will recognise that to ensure its success much money is needed.

Sir Donald MacLean, M.P., in a few pregnant comments upon the Report of the Industrial Transference Board,¹ which endeavours to explain away disagreeable facts by attributing the failure of the Empire Migration Scheme to the reluctance of the Dominions to receive British migrants, goes straight to the root cause of the trouble.

He says: "Migration within the Empire is undoubtedly a factor of prime importance in the mitigation of unemployment. Emigration must not be made compulsory, but, clearly, thousands of our fellow-citizens are young, fit, adventurous, and eager to migrate. Speaking frankly, unnecessary difficulties are put in their way by the Dominion and home authorities, and their disappointment and disillusion are evident.

"It would pay England handsomely to capitalise the prospective dole over five years for the purpose of financially encouraging desirable emigrants. The Dominions should be prepared to take some risks if Britain finds the money."

And this sums up the position. To give any scheme any chance of success, not two millions in five years or two millions every year are required, but ten, twenty times that sum. If half the money spent in keeping people in compulsory idleness in Britain were diverted to great, ultimately remunerative, schemes of development in the Dominions, Empire migration on a grand scale would be possible and tens of thousands of the population now on the dole would find employment.

The problem has to be solved. The responsibility for solving it rests alike upon the shoulders of Britain and

¹ Vide Appendix, page 406.

the Dominions. But Britain must lead the way. If she is prepared to deal with the question in the spirit in which men face a question of life or death, Empire migration can be made something more than a theme for post-prandial orators. The time for words has passed—the hour for action is here, but that too will soon pass.

What is it we are trying to do? To develop and hold the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. Without migration of British people to the Dominions the Empire cannot be held together. Flamboyant speeches about its unity are but the tinsel decoration. The pillars which hold up the Temple of Empire are men and women of British stock. Lacking adequate numbers of these, the great edifice must collapse.

It will not collapse to-morrow, or next year, perhaps not in this generation; but without an effective policy of migration it is as surely doomed as one stricken by some mortal but lingering disease.

Let me make my meaning clear. I do not suggest for a moment that if the population of the Dominions ceases to be preponderatingly British that this means the end of Great Britain or of the Dominions: they will go on; but failing a steady stream of British migrants, they will not go on together.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

It is not the purpose of this book to deal with the problem of migration in detail, but two or three practical suggestions may be put forward for consideration.

The West Australian Government has embarked upon a great land settlement scheme, embracing 8,000,000 acres of Crown lands which it purposes cutting up into 3,500 farms. The estimated expenditure is £12,000,000. The British Government is doing something to assist, but not nearly enough. The population of West Australia is less than 400,000, and upon this handful of people rests the responsibility of developing a country

ten times as large as Britain. The greater part of this vast area is virgin soil, and when every allowance has been made for arid and useless land, there still remains ample country with a decent rainfall and good climatic conditions upon which millions of people could profitably be settled. Many new States can be carved out and areas now solitary and remote can be populated and brought within touch of the existing or new centres of population.

A GREAT ROADS POLICY

If Australia is to absorb more migrants, she must have more capital for developmental purposes. Her wide spaces handicap her progress—the development of countries, like that of living organisms, goes hand in hand with, and is in fact dependent upon, the means of communication. Roads, railways, airways, telegraphs, and telephones are the vascular and nervous systems of nations, fructifying, nourishing, and energising their economic and social lives. Where the means of communication are primitive or do not cover the whole area of the country, progress lags, the resources of the country cannot be effectively developed, fertile lands remain uncultivated, and industry beats its wings against the bars of its economic prison.

If we are to absorb more people we must open up fresh avenues for the creation of new wealth. Men live by ministering to the wants of others: first-class roads are wanted in the relatively well settled districts, and decent roads in the areas now wholly devoted to grazing, and in those, such as the south-western districts of Western Australia, as yet almost in a state of nature. Everything is relative; much has been done in the way of settlement, but, given more effective means of communication and the presence of the additional population which the great work of constructing new roads and improving those already in existence would attract, the country already settled could maintain four or five times its present population.

The only way to ensure land settlement is to make life on the land pay; given reasonably fertile land, where good roads go, settlers will follow. Good roads mean swift, easy, and economical access to markets. Settlement begets settlement. Other things, no doubt, are necessary, but good roads and the means to travel quickly over them act as a most powerful stimulant to settlement. Along with the telephone, radio, and aeroplane they bring the city to the country and make life on the land at once easy and profitable. Of all the agencies that have contributed to the progress of the United States, there is no single one that has done and is doing so much to populate the more remote districts and to energise and stimulate economic and social life than good roads.

Much has already been done by the Australian people. They have created a network of roads and railways. They have linked their far-distant outposts with the great centres of population, the ganglion and heart of the community, and so have enabled six millions of people to live at a high standard of comfort in a land in which for ages a mere handful of savages struggled for a bare existence.

And this work is still going on, but now at a much more rapid rate than ever before. The motor has revolutionised not only the social and industrial life of the people, but their outlook also. Every phase of human activity is adjusting itself to the swiftly moving car. And so a great national roads policy has been evolved and is being as rapidly carried out as circumstances permit.¹ But so much has to be done that it is quite evident that, unaided, it will be a task too long drawn out.

As I have said, settlement begets settlement; population attracts population; with every additional million the task of development becomes easier. Schemes impossible for six millions are practicable for ten and easy

¹ The expenditure upon roads throughout the Commonwealth for the year 1927-8 amounted to £14,000,000.

for twenty. More people in Australia mean brisker trade in Britain. With more people Australia will be better able to defend herself, and so lighten the burden of Empire defence which now rests so heavily upon the shoulders of the Mother Country.

The suggestion opens up a wide field of possibilities. Employment on road construction would serve to acclimatise migrants and afford them opportunities of becoming familiar with Australian conditions and what life on the land in Australia means. If the migrants were intermixed with Australians, friendly relations would be promoted.

Where the roads opened up new or sparsely settled country, the land on either side ought to be resumed and migrants and Australians settled on alternate blocks. If Britain found the money for roads, she would be entitled to expect some further preference on British motor-cars, and with such additional advantage there is no reason why British manufacturers should not secure the lion's share of the motor imports into the Commonwealth. And these are very considerable. The position should be reversed, and this would mean several millions of additional trade to Britain. To this of course must be added the increased demand for British products by the British migrants—every ten thousand of these would mean in round figures an extra million of British products. Ten thousand adult male migrants for whom work would be found on these roads would mean with their wives, families, and dependents, say, thirty thousand souls. Thirty thousand additional people in Australia mean about £3,000,000 more British imports, and this would of course provide employment for many people in Britain who are now unemployed.

This is Britain's opportunity. If the British Government will take up the question in earnest, here is a way sure and profitable by which the existing population in Australia can be more evenly distributed, land settlement promoted, and the industrial life of the community so

stimulated that its powers of absorbing migrants will be very greatly increased.

EMPIRE PRODUCTS IN BRITISH MARKETS

We turn now from roads to markets. Another practical way by which Britain could encourage people to settle upon the lands of Australia would be to assure settlers of a market for their produce. Something has been done in this direction already, but it is not timid gestures—more than set off by anti-Empire action—that are needed, but a bold, comprehensive policy.

Measures for the encouragement of inter-Empire trade are usually introduced with apologies, and opponents and lukewarm supporters placated by assurances that “it is only a little one.” But if the Empire is worth keeping, Empire trade and development are surely questions of major policy not to be smuggled through in a half-furtive, half-apologetic way, but to be inscribed proudly on our banners and supported by the whole of our forces in the full light of day. It is deeds, not words, that are wanted; the slogan “Buy within the Empire” sounds pretty cheap when we look on what is done to finance the foreign competitors of Dominion products.

“British money, enterprise, and long experience have been employed in developing the dairy industries of Soviet Russia, the Baltic States, and the Argentine Republic, so that both in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres large quantities of butter made in factories which are to a large extent controlled by Tooley Street are available for the purpose of keeping down the price of New Zealand and Australian butter. . . .

“The Siberian dairying industry, exploited, managed, staffed, and subsidised by British capital, will this year produce 100,000 tons of butter to be used as far as possible in depressing the price of butter on the London market, so that the New Zealand and Australian farmer will be compelled to take what he can get, and be thankful—if possible. Siberia is only one of the foreign countries

thus exploited by British capital; others are Latvia, Finland, and Estonia in the Northern Hemispheres and the Argentine in the Southern.”¹

While the orators split the air with loud cries about a self-contained Empire, Britain buys “the greater part of its supplies of beef from the Argentine, canned fruit from America, and sultanas and currants from Greece and Turkey, rather than give the order to any British Dominion—and while doing this, complains that British manufacturers are shut out of Australia by the tariff, although Australia is, next to India, Britain’s best customer, and takes approximately £60,000,000 worth of British goods yearly, and the 8,000,000 people of Australia and New Zealand buy more British goods than the 300,000,000 of Russia, America, Greece, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and the Argentine put together!

In the face of these most unpleasant facts, can we wonder that British migrants do not settle upon the lands of the Dominions or that Australians flock to the cities? Deeds speak louder than words. Britain is of course entitled to buy the goods she wants where she pleases; but if her merchants elect not only to patronise, but to finance and support these competitors of the Dominions and Britain’s avowed enemies and lukewarm supporters in order to undersell her kinsmen and her friends, she can hardly blame the Dominions if they regard the talk about “Empire markets for Empire products” as arrant humbug.

APPENDIX

REPORT OF THE INDUSTRIAL TRANSFERENCE BOARD

The tone of the Report is distinctly critical of the attitude of the Dominions towards migration. It says in effect: In theory the Dominions are in cordial agreement with Empire migration, but in practice they

¹ *New Zealand Dairyman*, June (?) 1928, article by the Editor upon his return from a recent visit to England.

are lukewarm. They are unduly exacting in their requirements, which, by accepting only the best type, would ultimately lower the standard of British manhood. While nominally extending preference to Britons, they allow large numbers of foreigners to enter. There are a million and a quarter unemployed in Britain, for 200,000 of whom—the coal miners—it is unlikely that work will ever be found in their previous callings.

The Dominions, it is urged, could help Britain to solve this urgent problem, but through timidity or short-sightedness they will not make the attempt.

The answer to all this is that it is not true that the restrictions imposed by the Dominions are unduly exacting. The Dominions do not seek to skim the cream of the race, but they are not prepared to accept the dregs. The best proof that the examination of intending migrants is not too severe is proved by the ease with which many misfits, mental and physical degenerates, contrive to pass it.

Australia cannot agree to take "C₃" class migrants. The present population of Australia has been built up from the adventurous, the hardy, the resourceful—this type has developed the country and, when the time came, fought for it. We want more people, but we are not prepared to accept people of any sort. If we cannot get migrants of good average quality, we must get on without any.

To the complaint of the Industrial Transference Board that the Dominions have not done all they could to help Britain to solve her unemployment problem, and that they could assimilate a large number of the 200,000 miners for whom there is no hope of employment in Britain, there is only one answer. It is quite true that there is ample space in these young countries for not only the 200,000 miners, but for the million and a quarter unemployed of Britain—but there is no work for them.

The coal industry of Australia is in a very depressed state, and imports of British coal are aggravating the position. At the moment of writing, Cardiff coal is being

sold in Adelaide at 7s. a ton less than the local article. A conference of mine-owners and miners has been called by the Government in the hope of finding some way of putting the industry on its legs again. As things are, it would be as helpful to ship unemployed Australian miners to Britain as it would be to send British coal-miners to Australia.

CHAPTER XVII

EMPIRE TRADE

“WHERE the treasure is, there is the heart also.” Along with migration the best way to ensure the unity of the Empire is to develop inter-Empire trade. A family of nations whose members, while speaking kindly of one another, do the bulk of their trade with foreign nations is in a fair way to disunion. And when individuals or nations who have lived in closest intimacy lose touch with one another, misunderstandings are likely to arise; these may breed quarrels, and family quarrels are notoriously bitter. The revolt of the American Colonies proved conclusively, if proof were needed, that sentiment¹ alone would not hold peoples together, even though they came of the same stock and spoke the same language.

BRITAIN'S EMPIRE POLICY IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

For centuries Britain's traditional policy was to conserve for herself the trade of the Colonies and overseas possessions, and even after the revolt of the American Colonies the stream of trade flowed along its ancient channels.

British statesmen had then a very clear concept of Empire—not the Empire as we understand it to-day, but nevertheless an Empire—and they recognised the

¹ Lord Melchett, in a recent press interview (November 1928), said: “I am the last man to underestimate the strength of the ties of sentiment and goodwill, but they will not keep the Empire together without an economic complex of some kind. Look at the growing alien population of Canada, with Italians, Japanese, etc., growing up without any sentimental bond.”

unity of interest between Britain and her overseas possessions. That the Colonies should buy British goods and that Britain in return should buy the produce of her Colonies seemed so obviously the natural, proper, and profitable course for people of the same stock scattered over the world and dependent upon each other for help in time of trouble that no one questioned its wisdom.

Throughout the long Napoleonic wars, Britain, happily for herself and for the world, was the sole mistress of the seas, and if the edicts of Napoleon affected her trade on the Continent, the monopoly of commerce with her own and ex-enemy Colonies more than compensated for these restrictions and continued to furnish the wealth necessary for the struggle against France.

BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC SUPREMACY

At the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century Britain was easily the first trading nation in the world. Her trade was nearly double the trade of her only competitors—France and America—combined, and for many years after Waterloo she virtually monopolised trade with her Colonies and possessions.

But other times, other ideas. At the close of the Napoleonic wars, although she did not realise it, Britain stood on the threshold of a new era. While the nations of Europe had been struggling furiously, a quiet, unassuming man had invented an engine that was destined to revolutionise the world. In a very few years the old England, which rested upon agriculture, passed away, and in its place rose modern England, based upon manufacture—England the workshop, with myriads of smokestacks darkening the skies and the clang of hammer and whirr of wheels shattering the peace of the countryside.

THE NEW ORDER

The dazzling vision of world-trade obsessed British manufacturers and reacted upon British statesmen. The old colonial system, which had made possible those

spacious monopolies—anathema to free traders—passed away as completely as the manners of the century that had developed it. The cry “Cheap food for the masses! Cheap raw material for industry!” carried the day, despite a stubborn resistance. The repeal of the Corn Laws and the Navigation Act symbolised the new policy. Britain’s rulers had learned their lesson. There were no more Boston tea-parties.¹ British goods were not forced down the throats of the Colonies. Full self-governing powers were granted to each part of the Empire as soon as its people could exercise them.

HOW A DECLINE BEGAN

The swing of the pendulum was complete. Britain had fought the American Colonies for her trade privileges, but in avoiding Scylla, her statesmen sailed dangerously near Charybdis. Resolved to avoid a too rigid and centralised control of the Colonies for the benefit of British interests, they adopted an attitude of indifference and aloofness incompatible with the interests of Britain and the unity of the Empire. If the Colonies chose to

¹ The traditional version of the famous Boston tea-party makes our blood sing in our veins as we read of the splendid triumph of the sons of liberty over the miserable mercenaries of a decadent despotism. Unfortunately, this stirring story falls short in one rather important detail. It is not true. The real trouble that led up to the historic incident was that American merchants had large stocks of smuggled tea which they were selling at a handsome profit. But just as things in the local market had been fixed up and competition knocked on the head, British ships loaded with cheap teas—which incidentally were of most excellent quality—sailed into the port. As it was painfully evident that if these cheap teas were landed, free American merchants would have to bid a long farewell to their anticipated profits, they resolved with one accord to frustrate this miserable attempt by the emissaries of the British tyrant to undermine the Citadel of Liberty. Where there’s a will there’s always a way. The free and independent spirits of the waterfront were invoked in the sacred name of Liberty to dump the tyrants’ tea in the harbour—which with great enthusiasm they promptly did, and achieved with one stroke a great victory for the glorious cause of liberty and a vindication of the right of the American Tea (or any other) Combine to bleed the free American people to its heart’s content.

trade with Britain, well and good, but their importance in the scheme of things was negligible, for the great manufacturing interests believed confidently that by letting things shape themselves, Britain would surely achieve her destiny, which, as they saw it, was supremacy among the trading nations of the earth. And for nearly half a century events seemed to prove that they were right. Under the new policy Britain's trade grew by leaps and bounds, her goods poured irresistibly into every country, her ships sailed every sea, her power, her wealth, her dominion, daily expanded. The blaze of her glory lit up the whole world.

But time moves on, and during the last half-century her pre-eminence as a trading nation has slowly declined. Her grip upon the world's trade has gradually slackened. Competitors, once like limping atomies compared with her mighty stature and speed, have driven her out of many markets, and she is hard put to it to hold her own in others. But for her trade within the Empire her position would be much worse, and she is steadily losing ground even in Empire markets, in which, had her rulers only exercised vision, wisdom, and courage, she would have continued to enjoy her rich and vitalising monopoly.

It is to review the development and distribution of Empire trade during the past three-quarters of a century and reveal the pitiful story of Britain's vanquishment in her own estate that we now turn.

EMPIRE TRADE PASSES FROM BRITAIN

By 1840 Britain had begun to lose that monopoly of trade with her Colonies and oversea possessions which was an important movement in her commerce during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Thirty years before, the trade of these Colonies totalled about 46 millions sterling, all of which went to enrich Britain. By 1840 Britain's Empire trade had increased, but not proportionately with the expansion of that trade. And this is the story of the next three decades. In 1870 the

total trade of what are now the Dominions, India, and the Crown Colonies amounted to 238 millions. Of what may for convenience be termed Empire exports, Britain bought 51 per cent., and she sold in Indian and colonial markets 44 per cent. of all the goods they imported. In 1810 the trade of the Colonies had been over 50 per cent. of the total British trade; in 1870 it was 21 per cent. But British trade had grown so enormously during these sixty years that the falling off gave the people of Britain no concern.

To them all seemed very well. Britain had become, as the mercantilists had predicted, the first trading nation of the world. She was indeed so easily first that her competitors seemed to be out of the picture. Among the Great Powers her position seemed unchallengeable. Freedom of trade had been splendidly vindicated. Britain's exports—the true test, since the industrial population greatly outnumbers the agricultural, and the nation therefore mainly depends upon its foreign customers for its food-supply—had shown a marked upward curve. To prevent retrogression in a country so circumstanced, the value of the country's exports must at least keep pace with the growth of population. And in the period under review this had been greatly exceeded. Exports for the five-year period 1840-44 averaged £1 18s. 8d. per head; during the quinquennium 1870-74 they were £7 7s. 4d. per head.

THE FIRST CHALLENGES

But faint clouds stained the horizon. At the dawn of the industrial era Britain had been first afield. Her geographical position, her immense iron and coal deposits, the skill and enterprise of her people, her command of the seas, and her vast, though scattered, oversea possessions had given her an overwhelming advantage which she had fully exploited.

In the next decade, 1875-84, other nations, outstripped in the earlier stages of the race for trade, began

to make up their leeway. Still, for the next few years Britain held her own as the industrial and commercial leader of the world, and in 1875 indeed she seemed to be rushing ahead as lustily as ever. But her rivals were coming along with a wet sail, and Germany and the United States definitely challenged her for the supremacy of the world. The trade of France was also growing rapidly.

By 1890 these competitors were in a fair way to making good their challenge, as the following figures clearly show. In 1870 Britain's trade, 547 millions, was 106 millions more than the trade of France, 276 millions, and America, 165 millions, combined; but in 1890 it was only 8 millions more—Britain 748, France 410, United States 330 millions—and Germany, the trade of whose component States was negligible before 1870, had built up in the two decades a trade amounting to 528 millions. Japan also had appeared as a trading nation with a foreign trade of 14 millions.

In 1900 the trade of France (460 millions) and the United States (449 millions) combined amounted to 909 millions, exceeding that of Britain (877 millions) by 32 millions, and the trade of Germany amounted to 554 millions and of Japan to 49 millions.

In 1913 the figures were as follows :

Britain	1,293 millions
France	588 „
United States	847 „
Germany	1,020 „
Japan	138 „

We see here that the combined trade of France and the U.S.A. exceeded that of Britain by 142 millions, that Germany was running Britain very close, and that the combined trade of Britain's four competitors more than doubled her own. Or, to set out the position in another way, where in 1870 Britain had more than half the world's sea-borne trade, in 1913 her competitors had nearly reversed the position—France and the U.S.A.

had nearly one-tenth more trade than Britain, and Germany, second on the list of great trading nations, was only 261 millions (about 20 per cent.) behind Britain.

At the outbreak of war, the combined trade of France, U.S.A., Germany, and Japan was more than double that of Britain.¹

In 1870 Britain had been so easily first that, as we have said, the others scarcely came into the picture. But by 1913 Germany was advancing so rapidly that it is evident in another ten years she would have displaced Britain. But the war threw everything into the melting-pot and shattered Germany's dreams of world-Empire. Her navy lay at the bottom of the sea, and most of her mercantile marine had been distributed amongst the Allied and Associated Powers. She had to begin again, and this she did to such good purpose that in 1926 her foreign trade was not far short of 1,000 millions. The following figures, showing the total trade for 1926, demonstrate how seriously she and other nations menaced Britain's position by that year.

TOTAL TRADE IN 1926

Britain	2,019 millions
Germany	908 „
France	961 „
United States	1,996 „
Japan	441 „

The trade of these four competitors totalled 4,306 millions—more than twice that of Great Britain.

While the trade of her competitors increased by 180 per cent. between 1900 and 1926, the trade of Britain had increased only by 136 per cent. Had she progressed proportionately to the other nations, her trade would have totalled 2,445 millions—436 millions more than it actually did.

¹ I have analysed phases of this decline in Chapter XV, "The Heart of the Empire."

II

Only too conscious of this distressing decline, we may now concentrate our attention upon Empire trade, which might have more than repaid Britain for a little foresight during the palmy days of last century. If her vision had been clearer, if she had realised the enormous possibilities of Empire trade, she could, while still pursuing her ambitious purpose of securing the lion's share of world-trade, have consolidated her position in those markets, a monopoly of which was hers for the asking, and which indeed she had so long enjoyed. A commercial supremacy established on foundations so broadly based would surely have defied every effort of her competitors to disturb. And even if she had fallen back in the race for world-trade, the trade of the Empire would have sufficed to ensure for her the foremost place amongst the great trading nations.

EMPIRE TRADE

In 1870 the trade of what are now the Dominions, India, and the Crown Colonies totalled 238 millions, of which 114 were with Britain. By 1913 the trade of these countries had grown to 1,148 millions, of which 476 were with Britain, 490 with foreign nations, and 178 millions inter-colonial.

In 1926 the trade of the Dominions, India, and the Crown Colonies was 2,161 millions—141 millions more than Britain's total trade. Of this Dominion, Indian, and Colonial trade, 711 millions was with Britain, 490 with foreign nations, and 178 millions inter-colonial.

In 1913 the Dominions, India, and Crown Colonies bought 36 per cent. of their imports from Britain and sold to her 46·8 per cent. of their exports. In 1926 they bought 34·3 per cent. of their imports from Britain and sold to her 31·7 per cent. of their exports. One may see the whole movement of world trade, and Britain's decline in the world's markets and in those of the Empire may be traced in the following table.

EMPIRE TRADE

TABLE A

	Total Trade of			Trade of Dominions, India, and Crown Colonies with		Proportion of				
	Britain.	Foreign Nations.	Dominions, India, and Crown Colonies.	Britain.	Foreign Nations.	Total British Trade to Total Trade of Foreign Nations.	Indian, Dominion, and Colonial Trade to Total Trade of Britain.	Indian, Dominion, and Colonial Trade with Britain.	Indian, Dominion, and Colonial Trade to Total Trade of Foreign Nations.	British Trade with India, Dominions, and to Trade of Foreign Nations with those Countries.
1810	90.	58	about 46	46	Negligible	Per cent. 155	Per cent. 50	Per cent. 100	Per cent. Nearly equal	Per cent. All with Britain
1880	697	1,167	319	173	31	51	40	51	26	558
1890	748	1,282	407	198	59	58	54	48	32	340
1900	877	1,506	471	199	98	58	55	42	31	200
1913	1,293	2,600	1,150	476	295	49.7	88	41	44	166
1920	3,049	8,576	2,112	1,029	694	35.2	60	48	24	146
1926	2,019	4,307	2,161	711	728	46.9	107	30	50	96

NOTE.—Figures are in millions of pounds sterling. By “Foreign nations” are meant France, Germany, United States, and Japan only.

THE SPLENDID ADVENTURE

The figures in this table are profoundly significant. They show that in 1810 the total trade of the Empire, excluding Britain, was about 46 millions—all, save a negligible amount, with Britain.

That in 1880 this trade had increased to 319 millions, of which Britain's share was 173 millions.

That in 1890 it had increased to 407 millions, of which 198 were with Britain.

That in 1900 it was 471 millions, of which 199 were with Britain.

That in 1913 it had increased to 1,150 millions, of which 476 were with Britain.

That by 1926 the total trade of the Dominions, India, and the Crown Colonies had grown to 2,161 millions, of which 711 millions were with Britain.

Hereunder I show the total imports to and exports from the Dominions, India, and Crown Colonies, and the imports from and exports to Britain by these countries.

	Total Trade (millions)		Total Trade (millions)	
	Imports.	Exports.	Imports.	Exports.
1810 . . .	Total trade 46		Total trade 46	
1870 . . .	114	124	50	64
1880 . . .	150	169	81	92
1890 . . .	205	202	97	101
1900 . . .	236	235	96	103
1913 . . .	575	575	269	207
1920 . . .	1,000	1,112	526	503
1926 . . .	982	1,179	337	374

GROWTH OF EMPIRE TRADE

These striking figures show, first, a most extraordinary development of the oversea Dominions and possessions of the Empire. At the beginning of the period under review the total trade of the Empire, excluding Britain, was a modest 46 millions. World-trade was then in its swaddling-clothes, and Britain had the lion's share of it, and practically all the trade of the Empire. A hundred years pass, years full of amazing progress ;

Empire trade, which had been no bigger than a man's hand, now covers a great portion of the commercial firmament. The growth is staggering, from 46 to 2,161 millions—that is to say, greater than the trade of Britain, greater than the trade of the U.S.A., greater than the combined trade of France and Germany!

BRITAIN SELLS LESS IN EMPIRE MARKETS

And daily this mighty tide of trade gathers greater volume and impetus. In thirteen years it has nearly doubled itself. And to think that Britain, who could have had it all, or as much as she could profitably handle, let it slip through her fingers! She is now at her wits' end to find markets for her manufactured goods, and as she looks with anxious eyes around the world she sees that in these markets where she was once unchallenged, which she neglected, which she ignored, which her statesmen declared could never take the place of the world's markets, her competitors are slowly pushing her to the wall.¹ And this despite the fact that in them she enjoys the benefit of preferential tariffs to help her.

Over a million people in Britain are on the dole; hundreds of thousands more on the poor-rate; British industries are in a very bad way—but for Empire markets many of them would almost certainly collapse. And yet in these markets, as we have seen, Britain is losing ground.

BRITAIN BUYS LESS FROM THE EMPIRE

That is one side of the story; there is another. If the Dominions, India, and the Crown Colonies are buying proportionately less from Britain, she is buying less from them. Empire trade is declining, and if this is allowed to go on, one does not need to be a prophet

¹ 1920 was a boom year. The trade of Britain then totalled 3,049 millions, France 2,313 millions, United States 2,782 millions, Japan 432 millions, while that of Germany was almost negligible.

THE SPLENDID ADVENTURE

to predict the disintegration of the Empire.¹ What is going to be done about it? Something is being done. Yes! There is the Empire Marketing Board, and there are the British preferential duties on sugar, dried fruits, etc., etc., and the shop-windows in Britain—or some of them—are plastered more or less heavily with posters urging the people to buy British goods. And a number of very earnest men and women are engaged in Empire propaganda. All very good, but obviously quite inadequate to meet the situation, for in 1913 Britain bought 46·8 per cent. of all the goods exported from various parts of the Empire; in 1926 she bought only 31·7 per cent.

This decline is not spread evenly over the whole field of Empire trade. In some favoured climes Britain has made headway, in some the decline is slight, but in others it is precipitous. The following table shows the total imports by the Dominions, India, and the Crown Colonies, their imports from Britain, and the percentage of British to total imports.

TABLE B

Column A shows total imports from country specified.

Column B shows imports from Britain.

Column C shows percentage of British to total imports.

Imports are shown to nearest million pounds.

	1900			1913			1926		
	A.	B.	C.	A.	B.	C.	A.	B.	C.
			Per cent.			Per cent.			Per cent.
Australia . .	41	23	57·0	80	41	51·2	151	63	41·7
Canada . .	38	9	24·7	133	45	33·7	201	28	13·9
New Zealand .	10	6	60·0	22	18	77·2	50	21	42·0
South Africa .	19	14	73·2	42	23	54·7	76	33	43·4
India . .	70	31	44·3	163	40	24·6	211	83	39·3
Crown Colonies .	57	12	21·0	134	40	30·0	293	109	37·2

¹ Lord Melchett, in a recent speech (November 1928) at the Empire Industries Association luncheon, trenchantly criticised the apathy towards inter-Empire trade. He warned his hearers that unless something was done soon, the Empire would be in a serious position.

Here we see that while in the Crown Colonies the percentage of British imports has increased during the period 1920-26 from 21 per cent. to 37·2 per cent., elsewhere it has declined. In India the decline is slight, but in the Dominions it is very marked. In Canada, for example, it has fallen nearly 50 per cent., and now stands at a mere 13·9 per cent.; in South Africa it has fallen from 73·2 per cent. to 43·4 per cent.; in New Zealand from 60 per cent. to 42 per cent., and in Australia from 57 per cent. to 41·7 per cent.

The distribution of Australia's wool clip shows the extent to which Empire trade is declining. In 1901 Britain bought 63·6 per cent. of Australia's export wool; in 1926 she bought less than half that proportion—31 per cent.

Well may Lord Melchett say that the position is serious. It is indeed so serious that if the drift is allowed to continue it may well become desperate. As things are, it is bad enough. But if the Governments of the Empire tackle the problem in earnest *before* Britain loses her position as the first trading nation in the world the drift may be checked. But nothing can be done until Britain first sets her own house in order. How she can do that I have indicated in the chapter on "The Heart of the Empire."

NOTE.—Throughout this chapter and in "The Heart of the Empire" we have disregarded the variation in price-levels over a period of years. For our present purpose it has not been necessary to consider it. But the appreciation in the prices of commodities hides the real position. Britain seems to be doing far better than she really is. For example, when we compare her exports for 1900—354 millions—with those for 1926—779 millions—we get an impression of really remarkable progress, which pleases us greatly, but which we can hardly reconcile with conditions at present prevailing in British industries. Of course the real position is very different. Expressed in terms of 1900 price-levels—that is to say, comparing like with like—we see that exports in 1926 were 390 millions and not 779 millions as given in the trade returns. In other words, on a per capita basis the British exports for 1926 were only 7*d.* more than in 1900! (£8 12*s.* 2*d.* to £8 12*s.* 9*d.*). This reveals a very serious state of affairs. In 1900 Britain was the great creditor nation of the world. Her national debt was only 780 millions. In 1926 her national debt was

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nearly 8,000 millions and she was no longer a great creditor nation. In order that Britain might be as well off in 1926 as she was in 1900, she ought to have exported very much more, because she had and has to pay the interest on the 7,600 millions of debt, and that rich fertilising stream of tribute from overseas which flowed so strongly in 1900 has dwindled to an almost imperceptible trickle.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FUTURE

ON THE THRESHOLD

WHAT has the future in store for the British Empire? Has it scaled the topmost peak of its greatness, and is it henceforth destined to move slowly down the slope into that oblivion which has engulfed the empires of the past? Will it be destroyed by some cataclysmic disaster, or its parts detach themselves one by one, creating many small suns in a new firmament where the radiance of this glorious orb of day is no more seen?

The new world on whose threshold we now stand will almost certainly see such developments and readjustments as will revolutionise man's social and economic circumstances and materially modify his outlook on life. The future, shrouded in mists we cannot pierce, promises to be very wonderful, but its splendour may be the fading hues of the sunset of civilisation rather than the noon of its greatness.

But if civilisation itself endures, the Empire with its extraordinary powers of adaptation to a changing environment may well survive. The crystal becomes a little cloudy when we peer for the details of these impending years, but at the worst we are not so ill-equipped for our task as would have been one who attempted to cast the horoscope of Empire in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, for we have a hundred years of amazing progress to guide us.

Time is a mighty conjurer; in his hands shadows become substance, and substance melts to shadow. Mountain peaks which in the earlier years of the nine-

teenth century seemed to reach to the topmost clouds are now insignificant mounds, whilst new heights then but foothills dominate the landscape.

When Nelson fought the battle of Trafalgar, the American Colonies had declared their independence and Britain's dream of Empire seemed to be shattered for ever. What are now the British Dominions were remote outposts inhabited by a handful of pioneers. British foothold in India was precarious and the issue of the struggle between France and England trembled in the balance. He would have been a bold man who would have ventured at that juncture to predict the greatness and splendour of the destiny awaiting the British peoples in the years to come.

Who could have foreseen that Britain, then fighting for her life, stood upon the threshold of an era of unparalleled progress through which she was to march triumphantly to supremacy amongst the trading nations of the world, or that these scattered pioneer settlements would flourish and develop into nations—wealthy, vigorous, free—which, remaining united to Britain and to each other, were destined to become along with her component parts of an Empire far greater than that which had passed away?

The century opening so inauspiciously has been one of wonderful change and development for all the world. But while the world in its efforts to adjust itself to new conditions has overturned ancient institutions and burst asunder the bonds that held people under one Government, the Empire has remained united. The waves of change have dashed against it, but have not broken it asunder. Corroding time has not sapped its vitality nor driven its people along unfamiliar paths. The institutions of Government that served in the days that are gone serve still. The form has changed but little, the substance remains the same. Now, this in itself is most remarkable. In a changing environment all things must adapt themselves to the new order or perish. This applies to political institutions equally with all

other. The British Empire has shown that while it can adapt itself to the most unexpected effects of rapid change and development, it possesses to an extraordinary degree the powers of resisting changes which threaten its stability. It is not a mere straw on the stream of circumstances.

When we consider the Empire as it is to-day and compare its present splendour with its past obscurity, when we look at what it was, say a hundred, seventy-five, or even fifty years ago, note its amazing growth, its adaptability to revolutionary changes, its unity, and its steady adherence to its ancient institutions of government, we are encouraged to believe that it may well withstand the disintegrating influence of those further changes and developments which are the outstanding features of the age in which we live.

II

THE GLORY AND PENALTIES OF GREATNESS

The fact that the British Empire is a world-organisation must profoundly affect any attempt to predict its future during the next hundred years. The Empire is not only a great World-Power, it is an integral part of the edifice of modern civilisation, one, if not the chief, of the pillars of its gorgeous temple. If some great hand impelled by spite or wantonness should sweep it away, the world would be thrown into chaos as it was when Rome fell.

Its interests are world-wide. No people, however remote from what may from time to time appear to be the centre of gravity of human activities, can afford to reckon without the Empire, for its influence will be found in one form or another in their very midst. While that influence has a profound effect on the other nations of the earth, there is a reaction not less far-reaching upon the Empire itself. At every one of the innumerable points in human affairs at which British thought and action become manifest, the changing circumstances of

life and particularly of modern Western civilisation are at work, moulding and shaping the British Empire of to-morrow. National isolation is no longer possible. The stream of a changing environment holds the Empire on the bosom of its deep-running current, and bears it forward to its unknown destiny. Though the movement may be slow, it is as inevitable as the passage of time itself. The wizardry of science, the medley of inchoate aspirations and theories that passes by the name of Internationalism, the complex implications of the new phenomenon of an industrial world, are among the forces that are dissolving before our eyes the order of things that but yesterday appeared to possess every quality of permanence. The people of two centuries hence may well find themselves sundered from those of this generation by a gulf even wider than that which separates the Pharaohs from ourselves. Yet an inkling of the fate that awaits the Empire in that latter day may perhaps be gained from a consideration of some of the factors of change to which we have referred.

Thus in any attempt to forecast the future of the Empire, the fact that we stand upon the threshold of a new era in which science will assuredly make discoveries which will change this old world out of all recognition must not be ignored. The minds of men take on the colour of their environment, their outlook on life, their attitude towards other nations and to individuals in their own, is determined very largely by the conditions under which they live.

For thousands of years these conditions were almost static. For the great masses of mankind the world was bounded by the foothills of their native village; all beyond was *terra incognita*. The vast majority could not read and knew nothing of that which had been or then existed save what they learned from the lying mouth of rumour and sources hardly more trustworthy.

Profound change in the mental outlook of the great mass of mankind must surely result from the revolutionary developments in methods of communication which

have marked the last century, and particularly the last twenty-five years. The mind of man is dull and torpid unless stimulated and inspired by the clash with other minds. Ideas beget ideas, and just as in darkness growth ceases and life yields to death or falls to its lowest ebb, so in isolation the mind is barren and unreceptive to what is new and strange. For thousands of years until recently this has been the lot of man. And as man lived, so he thought. We do not speak of genius, nor even of talent—not of the few, but of the many who make up the mass of public opinion, the attitude of which towards those outside its own little country has been mainly responsible for the present suspicion and hostility with which nations regard each other. History has done very little to dispel misunderstandings and enlighten ignorance. Rarely painting the picture in true perspective, glossing over facts unfavourable to the nationals of the country for whom it is written, exaggerating, distorting facts that place other nations in a bad light, it has pandered to a spurious patriotism and kept alive ancient grudges that would otherwise have died long ago.

This spirit has permeated all sections of society in all countries. Little children have been taught to lisp the litanies of hate, the teachings in the schools have confirmed that which they learned at their mother's knee, and men and women have grown up in the belief that the inhabitants of other countries are the spawn of the Evil One, waiting but the opportunity to destroy them and their country.

But we have now to deal with a world in which man, although still clinging to the village outlook on life, is willy-nilly being manœuvred from his isolated fastnesses, to mingle with vast multitudes and exchange with them ideas—a world in which ignorance and prejudice are being swept away by the hum of myriads of voices, for the first time since the world began setting out their thoughts and making all mankind a critic of them.

For the first time since man came upon earth science is taking him from his lonely valleys to a great mountain

peak from whose summit he can see all the countries of the world stretching out before him. It is giving him her magic horn by which he can make his voice heard by countless millions, and in turn can hear their voices. The miracle of wireless is not yet appraised at its true worth. Of all the wonders that this age has been privileged to enjoy, its influence upon the lives and destiny of men will be perhaps the greatest. As yet in its swaddling-clothes, it has already broken down barriers that seemed insurmountable.

In a little while the peoples of the whole world will be in daily touch with one another. The effect of this upon the destiny of nations, upon the peace and progress of the world, transcends the mind of man to imagine.

Consider wars and the manner in which opposing peoples have been lashed to fury by the suppression of facts, by false suggestions, by biassed presentation. In a little while this will be no longer possible. There may be wars, but at least they will not come through misunderstanding deliberately or recklessly fostered by partisan statement of the facts.

Disputes between nations and great world-problems can then be considered by mankind at large, and the consequence of persistence along certain lines of policy be made clear. Whether nations will agree to adopt the remedies recommended by wise and far-seeing men remains to be seen, but at least something will be gained by world-wide publicity. In the world of yesterday nations turned their eyes inwards, neither knowing nor caring what happened outside their gates; and so when crises arose they were swept off their feet by gusts of national passion fanned by local appeals to patriotism from press and rostrum—and giving way to intemperate speech, blinded by anger, they refused to consider that peradventure they might be a little in the wrong and by precipitate action let loose the dogs of war.

It would seem at first sight that the bridging of distance by science is likely to prove an unalloyed benefit and strength to the Empire. By lessening the probability

of wars having their origin in ignorance and misunderstanding, it will go far to make impossible a jealous combination of other nations against the Empire for the purpose of destroying it. In addition it will be of inestimable advantage in the solving of the problems of Empire co-operation, providing ultimately the means by which common thought and action can in some real measure be achieved.

There are, however, other factors, some of them definitely disintegrative in their tendency, which can be observed in operation, and which seem likely to become more potent in their effect as time goes on. Of these perhaps the chief is the growing force of internationalism, which is to-day gaining new vitality from the very improvements in communications which we have just considered.

FEDERATION OF THE WORLD

The wish that some day the peoples of the earth may be united together in the name of common humanity to the complete elimination of every barrier that has its origin in race, colour, language, creed, and caste is one in which all can join. How far removed from us is the day when this will be possible, if indeed that day will ever come, it is impossible to guess. Certain it is that the ultimate triumph of internationalism, if it is to be reached at all, lies far below the most distant point on the horizon of the future which the eye of human prophecy can discern. For we are here considering not the possibilities of science to which we cannot venture to set a limit, but a question that involves directly the motives, instincts, and standards of human beings. In his surroundings, his mode of life, his mastery of natural forces, the twentieth-century inhabitant of New York or London is as different from primitive man as could well be imagined. But those optimistic souls, and they are many, who believed that these changes had been accomplished by anything like a corresponding improvement in human ethics had their illusion rudely shattered in 1914.

"Before the war had ended," writes Winston Churchill, "the only expedients from which an enlightened civilisation had been able to refrain were cannibalism and torture, and these were of doubtful utility." Some thousands of years of civilising influence had succeeded only in imposing on man a mask of artificial restraint, and when this dropped from him it was seen that an age of time had gone for nothing. The spirit of the ape-man, primal and remorseless, revelled in a holocaust of slaughter for which our prehistoric ancestors, possessing the will, happily for themselves lacked the means.

THE WORLD CHANGES ; MAN REMAINS THE SAME

However different the world then, the men and women in it are the same as they have ever been—credulous, moved by self-interest, doing that which they must, but no more, idle or diligent as circumstances compel, envious of those who have what they themselves want, living for pleasure though it leads to destruction unless deterred from its pursuit by some pressure they cannot resist, some danger from without or within ; intolerant of discipline, contemptuous of authority, loudly proclaiming the equality of man, his right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness—but denying to others what they claim for themselves, and doing their best to prove themselves unworthy of liberty and unfit to bear the great responsibilities of modern civilisation. A tiger in a cage is still potentially the terrible beast of the jungle ; captivity has repressed but not destroyed his fierce passions.

Environment has done much to widen our outlook, but even those who talk most about the brotherhood of man, whose avowed creed is the beating down of the barriers that divide the workers of the world into nations, in practice show but little of this spirit of brotherly love. In the World War we saw how the firm resolution of the Second International solemnly declared by the representatives of the workers of Europe to make war impossible by refusing to work until peace should be

restored melted like wax in the fierce flame of nationalism as soon as their countries were committed to war.

So that in the light of actual conditions it became clear that the dream of the Federation of Man, cherished by the idealist, is a vision too remote for our present-day world to be considered in the realm of practical things. But while this is so, the effect of the propaganda associated with Internationalism has become a factor of tremendous importance.

The brotherhood of man is a noble and imposing ideal. The Internationalists have inscribed this great ideal on their blood-red banner, and some who march beneath this banner have this ideal enshrined in their hearts; but the ideal of those who are the driving force behind Internationalism is not love but hate. They speak of universal peace, but they preach world war.

THE CLASS WAR

The arguments in favour of the class war are specious. The phraseology in which they are couched is high-sounding and makes a ready appeal to a certain class of mind. The true motive for the advocacy of Internationalism by these men is that it furnishes a pretext for attack upon the authority of the land in which they live. These self-professed champions of the cause of the proletariat are men intolerant of every form of government or control. The benign principles of brotherhood and universal peace are but a cloak for the troubled waters of anarchy, from whose stream they hope to salve some prize of profit to themselves. In every community are to be found persons who, by an unkind trick of Nature, have been born with an atrophied social sense, whose quarrel with organised Government is that it protects the right of property and human safety, preserves those weaker than themselves from being despoiled at their hands. It is from the ranks of this ragged rear-guard of civilisation that the propagandists of Internationalism are mainly recruited.

The industrial workers have been long ago discovered to be the most fertile ground in which to sow the seeds of discord. And the gospel that is preached to them is not one of salvation, but of destruction. The workers are adjured by these fanatic and designing men to prepare for the class war, the avowed object of which is to destroy civilisation. Any talk of creating a World State, either now or even within measurable time, is, on the face of it, idle. Yet the workers are being sedulously taught that the time has come for the first great step towards the millennium—the wrecking by force of every national Government, to replace it by the “Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” The teachings are disseminated under various names, but whether it be called Bolshevism, Communism, or Syndicalism matters little. There are ever the same disingenuous mouthings of ideals, the same secret motives of envy and cupidity. Internationalism, in the hands of its industrial exponents, has become an attack on the very structure of society.

COMMUNISM AND THE EMPIRE

The British Empire has been singled out as the chief object of attack by these apostles of disorder. The reason is that they see in the Empire one of the most formidable obstacles to the accomplishment of their fell designs. Everything that the expenditure of money and effort can achieve is being done, particularly by Russia, to misrepresent the Empire as a monster of greed and oppression. The comparatively recent history of Britain’s post-war commercial relations with Russia shows strikingly how these have been used as a cloak for espionage and sedition, and for attempts to undermine the authority of the British Government in the United Kingdom itself. Even more serious is the largely successful campaign that has been directed systematically against Britain by Russian agents in China. Skilful and unscrupulous propaganda has been used with the

object of inducing the belief among the Chinese that the British Empire is responsible for every ill from which their country has suffered since the first European trading agency was established on its shores. In India also the same policy of slander is being followed. Wherever capable agitators can be found to carry on the work of fostering disaffection, they are assisted and encouraged by the Russian Government.

What will be the future of this internationalist movement? Whether it will cast aside the thin pretence of idealism, whether it will in time wax greater in power or perish of inanition, may well be questions for speculation. It is hard for us to be sure that we see it in its true perspective. It may be but a passing phenomenon. It may well be, on the other hand, that the world is watching the opening of a new Pandora's box—that we see here the genesis of a force that will have profound effect on the destiny not only of the Empire, but of civilisation itself.

THE VOICE OF ANTI-CHRIST

The part that science will play in the future of Internationalism may well be of the very first importance. The extent to which large aggregations of people can be influenced, whether for good or ill, depends primarily upon facility of communication. The mass of the people are tinder to the spark of the written or spoken word. Lenin and Trotsky, past masters in the psychology of the crowd, used wireless with great effect. And since their time—so swiftly do events move in these latter days—wireless has developed greatly. In a little while, as has already been pointed out, it will be possible for the great outstanding leaders throughout the world to speak directly or through interpreters at their side, to the people of all nations. Imagine another Lenin, or the Anti-Christ himself, distance lending irresistible witchery to his words, addressing the millions of workers in some hour of international or economic crisis. Who

shall say what may come of it? Those men who have had practical experience in dealing with great masses of men in times of industrial or national upheaval know how crowds are swayed, reason trampled upon, and fierce passions aroused, until, obsessed by one idea, the many rush to do that which all but an insignificant handful of the individuals that compose it would strongly condemn.

III

WORLD POPULATION PROBLEMS

Another influence that will assuredly leave the world of a hundred years hence a very different place from what it is to-day is the amazing increase of population that has taken place and is still proceeding in almost every country. Growth and development are manifesting themselves on all sides, and this alone must inevitably create many very difficult and complex problems.

The world is rapidly filling up. In certain countries the birth-rate is falling, but, on the other hand, the death-rate is correspondingly lower. The population of the world has doubled itself in the past hundred years; at the present rate of increase it will double itself again in the same time. The problems that this increase will raise, not only for the Empire, but for Humanity, is most serious. Hygiene, sanitation, and medicine have made great advances. Infantile mortality has been greatly reduced and many diseases formerly levying fearful toll upon mankind have been successfully combated. Modern science has worked miracles. The world's death-rate has declined, people live longer, and a startling rise in the rate of natural increase has everywhere manifested itself. There is, of course, a practical limit to the growth of the earth's population. But long before that limit is reached, it seems inevitable that new enmities and rivalries will be created among the nations. It is characteristic of men and women that they must

THE FUTURE

eat. At the present day the peoples of the world in their emulation of each other are not primarily concerned with securing the means of existence. Rather the desire for fresh power, for adding unto themselves new possessions, animates them. But a century hence may find many of these peoples desperate and starving. The golden prize on which all eyes will be turned will be the last available tracts of land on which food can be grown.

The Dominions have vast tracts of land, much of which is fertile. At the present rate of increase, though this is very high, they will still be much more sparsely populated at the close of this century than most other countries of the world. Their claim to set limits to immigration and to determine the composition of their own populations without reference to world-opinion is tolerated, although with an ill grace by certain nations ; but the jealousy that even now tinges their outlook may ultimately become bitter and desperate under the goad of privation. In that day only the obvious possession of adequate resources of defence will preserve the Empire from being destroyed by its enemies.

THE EAST AWAKENS

An allied problem, and one likely to have a tremendous effect on the fortunes of the Empire during the next three-quarters of a century, is that raised by the fact of an awakening East. The world is now witnessing a dramatic crisis in the history of about one-third of its inhabitants. The countless millions of Asia have up till now been reckoned as of little moment in the calculations of Western statesmen. They have been negligible because, despite their numbers, they have lacked national consciousness. But coloured Asia is to-day struggling to its feet ; China, that ten years ago bore little more resemblance to a nation than do the peoples of the African continent, is groping for a national sense and slowly finding it. India, if not thoroughly awakened,

is stirring uneasily in its sleep. What may happen with China may be gauged from what happened to Japan. A bare half-century ago the dwellers in the Japanese Islands were of no account in the world's affairs. The nations of Europe, absorbed in rivalry with each other, had scarcely noticed their existence.

The close of the World War found Japan a front-rank Power, steadily extending her influence upon the mainland of Asia, with an activity in commerce and manufacture far exceeding that of many Western nations and second only to Britain and the United States in naval strength. Though she had lost nothing in the war, she gained much by the peace. All this she accomplished with 50 millions of people. What shall be predicted of the 450 millions of China, if now the hidden spring has been touched that will galvanise her into life as it stirred the people of Japan?

But it may well be doubted whether China has in her the makings of another and greater Japan, whose strength lies in the unity of its people and the nature of its Government. Those terrific forces now convulsing the vast body of China are centrifugal; she is being torn asunder rather than being welded more firmly together. And although evolutionary processes in these days move far more swiftly than formerly, China¹ has yet far to go before she can hope to stand before the world as an entity under one Government, with organised force at her command proportioned to the prodigious numbers of her people.

¹ The British Consul at Foochow stated in reply to an inquiry by the International Labour Organisation (1927): "On the whole, I am not sanguine enough to anticipate that anyone now living will see the economic condition in China as a whole greatly altered from what it has been in the past. . . . I should judge that the bulk of China is likely long to remain in a stage of social and economic evolution more analogous to that of England in the fourteenth century than in England in the twentieth century, and in all discussions as to the effect of possible labour legislation, that assumption must, I think, be steadily borne in mind. If this generation can raise the average level of China to the English average of 1450 or 1500, it will not have done badly."

THE FUTURE

But however that may be, it is certain that the development of these new forces in Asia will react profoundly upon the Western world. The very fabric of our civilisation may be imperilled, and perhaps, as Professor Lothrop Stoddard¹ believes, totally destroyed. But this I doubt.

THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

But apart from what may happen in the East, there will possibly be other far-reaching changes in the balance of national power. Some of those who predict the disintegration of the British Empire speak with assurance of the growth and ever-increasing power of other nations. According to some of these, the United States is destined to assume the hegemony of the world of to-morrow. The very influences which, they declare, must inevitably result in the breaking-up of the Empire will serve to consolidate her position and establish her firmly as the unchallengeable leader of the world. What the United States will be in one hundred years' time no one knows. The heterogeneous elements that make up its population, the vastness of its area, the diversity of interests—South and North, East and West, Capital and Labour, racial and religious differences—all these influences are tugging at the bonds of unity.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

To others again, to whose far-seeing eyes the towering and majestic edifice of the British Empire is but a vague shadow, an ephemeral thing, doomed to extinction, the League of Nations, its power strengthened, its authority ever widening until it stands unchallenged, is certain to be the dominant power in the world of to-morrow. The Empire may perhaps wither and decay, as have all others that preceded it; although in this case precedent proves nothing, for there has never been anything in the least like the British Empire before. But that it has

¹ *The Rising Tide of Colour.*

passed the zenith of its greatness, that its strength is fast oozing from it, and that it stands now almost like blind Samson, can only be assumed by those who wilfully close their eyes to plain facts or visionaries who live in a world of dreams. The truth is that the Empire has within it to-day fuller resources of vitality and fewer active forces of disintegration than any of its alleged rivals. Without going beyond the confines of its own territories, it can find food, shelter, and clothing for all its peoples. Whatever may be the conditions of to-morrow, the British Empire has proved that it possesses the flexibility needed to adapt itself to change and the strength to resist influences which threaten its stability. Adaptability and stability are indeed the marks of this people. We can but judge the future seen from the vantage-ground of the present. Provided that Britain can hold her own as a Great Power—and this depends upon her success as a manufacturing and trading nation—where is there a nation, or a combination of nations, that can show a better prospect of survival, a clearer indication of potential power, than the British Empire?

BRITAIN AND THE DOMINIONS

The Dominions still acknowledge their mother and, despite some talk tall, admire and love her. But time may dull their memories—they will, or perhaps may, forget. In any case, they have their hands full, their minds fully occupied with numerous and very important problems. Will the Dominions drift apart from each other and from the Motherland? That is the question. The methods which serve when the members of a family are children are unsuited to their management when they reach maturity.

As its population increases, each Dominion will become more and more conscious of its importance, and internal pressure will compel its Government to assert itself. The real or fancied interests of the Dominions and parts of the Empire are bound to diverge, and at times to be

in direct conflict. As long as Britain retains enough influence to smooth over differences, to lead the way to some reasonable compromise, all will go well. But as the years pass, this influence is likely to wane. It will last longer in some Dominions than others, for the conditions vary considerably throughout the Empire. This influence is built upon sentiment, tradition, racial ties, and self-interest. But in another quarter of a century in some Dominions the bulk of the population will not be of pure British stock, and millions will be migrants from other countries, or native-born of foreign parentage; while in Dominions like Australia—where the population is almost entirely of British descent—unless the number of British migrants is substantially increased, only a small percentage will have been born either in Britain or be the children of British migrants, and so directly subject to an environment in which a strong sentiment in favour of Britain is imbibed with their mother's milk. The sentiment will remain to the third and fourth generation, but as the years pass it is likely to grow weaker. The Australian of the second and subsequent generations is an Australian first and everything else afterwards. As for the Canadians, as we have seen already, there are millions to whom Britain and British institutions count, at best, for very little.

Again, one of the most potent factors in maintaining unity in the past has been the overwhelming superiority in numbers, wealth, and power; her right to leadership of the British family of nations has never been questioned. She was and is still obviously the proper and only possible leader. The ties of blood, tradition, sentiment, self-interest, all combine to give her a position that is unassailable and which formerly none thought of questioning. But time works great changes.

DISTURBANCE OF EQUILIBRIUM

The growth and development of the different parts of the Empire have been rapid and continuous. All the

Dominions and other parts of the Empire, except Britain, have greatly increased in numbers, substance, and influence. Assuming that this growth continues for the next fifty years, conditions will be created which are likely to disturb the existing equilibrium.

The present white population of the Dominions is in the neighbourhood of 18 millions. At the present rate of increase, which in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand is about 2 per cent. per annum—and it seems probable that this may be exceeded—the white population of the Empire, excluding Great Britain, will be nearly 70 millions in seventy years.

The population of the United Kingdom, on the other hand, has reached the saturation-point. Britain can hold no more—cannot indeed find profitable employment for those she now has. And although her birth-rate has fallen, yet this will be set off by the longer span of life due to modern hygiene, sanitation, and the achievements of medicine. And this applies to Europe generally. It is probable therefore that immigration to the British Dominions will steadily increase during the next fifty years.

A day will come when the overwhelming superiority of Britain will be no longer the dominant factor in Empire relationship. That will be the crucial point. For such a disturbance of the balance of population will probably compel many serious changes in the methods by which the Empire now carries on its domestic affairs, and its relations with the world. Our institutions are in many cases adapted survivals. Not only the machinery of foreign policy, but the conventions associated with the monarchy and the whole system of Imperial defence, assume as their very basis an Empire in which Britain holds an undisputed hegemony. Adapted as they may be, they have their roots deep in a day when the Empire consisted of Britain and a number of Colonies and possessions under her sway. The old garment has been altered and patched—here it has been lengthened and there a new piece has been let in—but the garment is still the

same. And as yet it serves its purpose. But what of the day when the Dominions together will have far outstripped Britain, not only in population, but in wealth, industry, and commerce? At present London is the heart of the Empire, not only because of its wealth and size as a city, but by express recognition of every kind. Here is the sovereign of the Empire to be found; nor does he leave England for even so signal an event in the life of a great section of his subjects as the opening of the first national Parliament of one of his Dominions. Here the Imperial Conference meets, though Ottawa would be more central than London. Here are assembled the Embassies of all nations, although their business vitally concerns the Dominions as well as Britain. But when one or more of the Dominions, in every respect that makes for national importance, have outdistanced Britain, this state of things will have to be reviewed. It may be that the centre of the Empire will be transferred in less than a century to one of the Dominions—Canada or Australia.

CRITICAL STAGES

Perhaps these critical stages in the future of the Empire will be successfully negotiated. But on this we speak with great caution. The relations between the Dominions *inter se* differ very considerably from those existing between the Dominions and Britain. The Dominions, despite some protests, accept her leadership, but it is extremely doubtful whether they would yield pride of place to any one of their own number. Yet the circumstances of the Empire are such that it is difficult to see how unity can be maintained without leadership. In foreign affairs some one amongst the Britannic Commonwealth must act for all—or, anyway, must speak for all. Who is that leader to be if Britain lays down the sceptre? History is not very reassuring on this point. The old king dies, and the peace that for half a century has blessed the nation is blown out like a candle in the wind, while his sons and grandsons fight furiously for

mastery. Sometimes it has happened that even after bloody conflict long sustained, unity has been finally shattered, and out of one, two or more kingdoms have been carved. So—although there will be no conflict—it may be with us, in those days to come. Some of the Dominions may elect to go their own way, while others, cementing the ties that bind them to each other and to Britain more closely, will still hold aloft the banners of an Empire not less powerful than it is to-day.

THE FUTURE OF CIVILISATION

In the preceding pages we have passed briefly in review some of the more significant and important of the tendencies that are at work around us steadily breaking up the old order. Like the unsubstantial pageant of a dream, the world of yesterday has faded into the wonderful reality of the present; and now already the great landmarks by which man still sets his course melt and grow misty before the eyes. Dare we be confident that amid this welter of change the structure of civilisation itself will partake of the quality of the everlasting hills and remain unshaken by the buffeting of Time?

This is the greater question in which the lesser one of the future of the British Empire is swallowed up. Men speak as though there had been but one civilisation—our own—but there have been many. Civilisation is not a continuous but an intermittent process. Just as there were Empires before ours, so there have been civilisations. We speak of our progress, and measure it by comparing that which is with that which was five hundred or a thousand years ago. As Spurrell¹ points out, if we want to institute comparisons with a view to ascertaining whether there has been progress in human affairs, we must compare different civilisations at the same stage, not ourselves with what we were five hundred years ago, or with what Rome was in the early days of the Republic or in the last death-throes of the Empire. The Athens

¹ *Modern Man and His Forerunners.*

of Pericles was nearer to us than this. "Indeed," as Arnold has remarked, "the portion of history dealt with by Thucydides is only ancient in the sense that the events happened a long time ago; in all other respects it is more modern than the history of our own countrymen in the Middle Ages." Judged by these standards, does man progress at all? That our civilisation is different in some respects from those of Egypt, of Babylon, of Minoa, of Greece, of Rome, is beyond question, but it may well be doubted whether it is in any way entitled to be regarded as better, or that the differences were other than in matters of detail. The civilisation of Babylon about 2000 B.C. was different in detail from that of London in nearly A.D. 2000, just as its material magnificence and stupendous engineering works were different; but it was not one whit less highly organised, although it perished utterly and is separated from our day by other civilisations and intervening periods of barbarism.

And history tells of no alteration of growth and decay of civilisations. They wax and wane; each in its turn bestraddles the earth like a Colossus. The whole world resounds with its glory and acknowledges its power—each seems destined to last for ever. And then they just die. The monuments of their greatness are covered with the dust of ages; the place that knew them once knows them no more. In many cases their very names are lost; the wild ass of the desert stamps upon the tomb of a departed monarch of the world, but cannot break his sleep; the jackals howl amidst the ruins of the mightiest city of the known world. Civilisations rise and fall. The universal law, the law that pervades all things, determines alike their coming and their going. Like men they are born, some to die in infancy, some in the early morning of great promise, a few reaching splendid maturity and lingering on to old age, their greatness fading slowly like a gorgeous tropical sunset. But death comes to all. That is the lesson history teaches.

Why did the civilisations of antiquity perish? Who can say? How came they to be? The answer to this

might help us to understand how they decayed. Perhaps disease weakened and ultimately destroyed them. Certainly disease was one of the factors which hastened the fall of the Roman Empire, and it may have played a part in the fall of all. Mixture of races, too, had its influence. But the greatest factor was the effect of the environment created by all great civilisations, which has proved fatal to that discipline, that subordination of self, of faction, for the good of the State, essential to a virile community. The demagogue, and his prototype the plutocrat, are the carrion crows of national greatness, the vultures of civilisation. In a word, civilisations decay in the main through the modification of the struggle for existence and the consequent multiplication of the unfit, which, particularly in a state of society where government is in the hands of the many, means rule by the unfit.

The idea that this boasted civilisation is destined to disappear like those that preceded it, comes upon us with a shock. It conjures up chastening, sombre thoughts. Men will not have it. It is an affront to their greatness. We think ourselves so sure, so superior, so different from anything that has gone before us. To us progress seems to be the law of life, and a high destiny seems to await modern man. Other civilisations have died, but they were very different from ours—in some things well enough, but in others, in which we excel, as farthing dips to thousand-candle-power arc lamps. They died! Yes! Probably they deserved to die. They had served their purpose—they were at best but torch-bearers who went ahead to light up and prepare the way for us. We shall endure; the dust of ages will not—shall not—cover us and our greatness. Well it may be so.

And in one respect this civilisation differs from all others, it covers a much wider field. The civilisations of antiquity were more or less localised. Even the Roman Empire—the greatest of them all—judged by this standard is at best a Ben Nevis against an Everest, and did not cover more than one-half of the territory of the British Empire. For all practical purposes the whole world now

enjoys some measure of civilisation. The civilisations of antiquity were like torches carried in a dark wood—when one spluttered and died down, another burst into flame. There never was complete darkness: twilight perhaps, but not darkness. But if the world-civilisation of to-day should be involved in ruin, the blackness of Stygian night would descend upon humanity and its prospects. Stagnation, utter and complete, would be the result.

But what does Destiny reckon of consequences? Our civilisation may be unique, but it is mortal, and the whirlpool of its own decay may engulf it. Under the conditions of life that preceded modern civilisation, there was in perpetual operation a process that kept the peoples of the earth virile. This was the law of the survival of the fittest. So keen was the struggle to live, that all who were weak, ailing, or incompetent were forced to succumb. Only the strong lived to bear children. The process was cruel and ruthless, but it was effective. To-day, under the ægis of Western civilisation, the operation of the law has been reversed. The inhabitants of a civilised community lead a sheltered life. Bodily danger has been all but eliminated, privation and hardship have been reduced to a minimum. The weak have almost as good a chance as the strong of holding their own. And should they fall behind in the race, fainting and exhausted, they are nurtured and kept alive by every means that can be devised. While inferior men and women are thus assisted to reproduce their kind, the reverse is true of the better elements who have created man's civilised institutions and must be looked to to preserve them. The tendency to late marriages, birth-control practised by the wrong people, the Great War, the breaking down of the purity of the Nordic stock by intermarriage—all these things are lessening the reproductivity of the higher types.

Whether these tendencies will eventually cause civilisation to crumble and collapse, decayed at its very heart, or whether, long before that can happen, the peril will be seen and measures taken to avert it, are matters for speculation. Even should civilisation survive these and

other dangers to which I have referred, there is yet the possibility that another World War far more disastrous and destructive than that of 1914, will involve it in utter ruin. It is incredible that man should be so much more foolish in the aggregate than as an individual—that he is ready, with no real hope of gain, to pour out blood and treasure in destroying himself and his handiwork.

But man has a will, and with that he may at least modify destiny. The menaces of to-morrow are great ; but into man's hands to-morrow, science will put great instruments. He will prise open many more of Nature's jealously guarded treasure-houses : he will make the land yield more ; he will turn deserts into fecund granaries ; he will harness mighty forces now roaming untamed. And with greater power will come a wider and clearer outlook. We seem to be standing now at the apex of civilisation, but we may be only the forerunners of a civilisation that will look back upon us as groping, foolish barbarians. We have come far from the Piltown man, and we may go as far again in a much shorter time. The human being of a few hundred years hence will probably smile at the perplexity with which we search for some way out of the problems of the next hundred years, as we smile now at those who derided the possibilities of the wonderful inventions and discoveries that have revolutionised the lives of modern men.

And the Empire ? Well, although its roots are deep in the past, it is the child of the age in which we live, and fitted, if any is, to be banner-bearer of the army of progress. It has always thrived on trouble ; it is resilient, vital, strong, and in the great wide lands beyond the seas it can renew its mighty youth, and out of the troubles shrouded in the misty coming days pluck a new vitality.

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